MAY STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CENTENARY

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May Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast

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MAY STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CENTENARY

A History of the Congregation

BY

JOHN WILLIAMSON

BELFAST
M'CAW, STEVENSON & ORR, LIMITED
THE LINENHALL PRESS
1929

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INTRODUCTION

When invited by the Committee to undertake the task of writing a short history of May Street Presbyterian Church (in view of its Centenary), I hesitated to accept the responsibility, fearing that my lack of experience in such work and the pressure of other duties might interfere with the successful accomplishment of the project. Having consented to attempt the work—with a very inadequate conception of its magnitude—I soon got so interested in studying the records that the work became a pleasure, and I was only too willing to spend my leisure moments in acquiring a knowledge of the history of the congregation. Many churches are said to be "historic," but no church in Ireland can lay claim to this description with more justification than May Street, and it is fitting that its history should be put into a form more permanent than manuscript documents. Its sons and daughters are scattered throughout the world, and many have fond memories of happy days spent within its fellowship. In its conception it was associated with the name of one of Ireland's greatest sons—one who really belonged to the Church Universal. His successors have been men of exceptional gifts and striking personalities, whose work God has owned to the blessing of many souls. The church of to-day has reason to be thankful not only for such a ministry, but also for the men of faith who, in the past, with great labour and much sacrifice, erected such a structure and left it as a heritage to those who to-day enjoy its amenities.

I wish to bear testimony to the careful manner in which the records have been kept by those who have been successively responsible. Complete minutes of both Session and Committee are available, but it is to be regretted that some of the cash records are missing. Much information was gleaned from other sources, and in this connection thanks are due to the Very Rev. W. J. Lowe, M.A., D.D., LL.D., to Miss Craig, of the Presbyterian Historical Society, and to Dr. S. E. A. Acheson, each of whom rendered valuable assistance. Helpful suggestions were made by the Rev. A. Wylie Blue and the Rev. John H. Morton, Clerk of the Presbytery of Belfast, who kindly read and corrected the proofs.

This effort is submitted in the hope that, with a fuller knowledge of the history of the church, the members may be led to a deeper and more devoted attachment to the work of God at home and abroad.

J. W.

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MINISTERS

Rev. Henry Cooke, D.D., LL.D.

Ordained 10th November, 1808.
Moderator of Synod of Ulster, 1824.
Installed 24th November, 1829.
Moderator of General Assembly, 1841 and 1862.
Died 13th December, 1868.
Interred in Balmoral Cemetery.

Rev. John Samuel MacIntosh, M.A., D.D.

Ordained 5th November, 1862.
Installed 4th March, 1868.
Resigned 4th January, 1881.
Died 5th January, 1906.

Rev. Robert John Lynd, B.A., D.D.

Ordained 19th September, 1860.
Installed 31st January, 1882.
Moderator of General Assembly, 1888.
Died 17th November, 1906.

Rev. William John McCaughan.

Ordained 1st January, 1884.
Installed 24th September, 1907.
Died 30th July, 1910.

Rev. William Patterson, D.D.

Ordained 22nd July, 1886.
Installed 20th April, 1911.
Resigned 31st March, 1915.

Rev. Alexander Wylie Blue.

Ordained 27th April, 1900.
Installed 25th May, 1916.

MEMBERS OF SESSION

Ordained 3rd April, 1834.

John Potts.
Robert Workman, Jun.
James Hill.
David Rodgers.
Daniel Browne.
Charles Blackwood.
Samuel Gelston.

Ordained 29th March, 1871.

James Nesbitt.
Thomas McCann.
Robert Beggs.
Thomas H. Browne.
Samuel Johnston.
Robert Gibson.
Samuel Gelston.
William Hogg.
Rev. Alex. Russell, LL.D. (installed).

Ordained 23rd February, 1885.

David Mitchell (installed).
James Best.
James L. Hamilton.
James H. Haslett.
James Flinn.
John C. Hunter.
John B. McAuley.
James Maxwell.
John Woods.

Ordained 31st March, 1892.

G. H. Elliott (installed).
William Marshall.
John Stevenson.
John Williamson.

MEMBERS OF SESSION

Ordained 12th October, 1906.

THOMAS BELL.
JOHN CLEMENTS.
WILLIAM JAMES LEWIS.
WILLIAM P. McDOWELL.
ROBERT CULBERT.
JOHN TOPPING.
JOHN FRAME.
ROBERT LYNAS.

Ordained 18th January, 1914.

WILLIAM C. LEEBURN (installed).
DR. SAMUEL EDWIN ALBERT ACHESON.
ARCHIBALD LYNN.
WILLIAM MOOREHEAD.
WILLIAM JOHN PETTICREW.
WILLIAM JOHN PRICE.

Ordained 30th January, 1921.

ANDREW BEGGS.
THOMAS E. S. CROZIER.
WILLIAM J. FERGUSON.
ROBERT THOS. GRAY.
WILLIAM HARVEY.
SAMUEL HOGG.
ARTHUR EDWARD MOORE.
WILLIAM SHARP.
WILLIAM TENNANT SMITH.

Ordained 7th March, 1926.

ROBERT RIDDELL McDOWELL.
BRICE RINGLAND McQUISTON.
ROBERT OSBORNE.
ERNEST REA.
CHARLES KEVIN SANDILANDS.
WILLIAM JOHN YOUNG.

CLERKS OF SESSION

David Rodgers	1834
Charles Blackwood	1835–1855
James Nesbitt	1871–1882
William Hogg	1882–1888
John B. McAuley (*Assistant*)	1885–1888
Thomas Henry Browne	1888–1895
John Stevenson	1895–1907
John C. Hunter	1907–1910
John Williamson	1910

TREASURERS

John Thompson	1828–1829
Robert Workman	1829–1835
John Potts	1835–1839
Samuel Gelston	1839–1845
John Potts	1845–1856
William Allison	1856–1861
William John Doyle	1861–1863
Hugh Porter	1864
Thomas McCann	1864–1902
David Mitchell	1903–1915
John Williamson	1915
Ernest Rea (*Joint Treasurer*)	1925

SECRETARIES

Robert Workman	. . .	1829–1835
Andrew Sparrowhawk	. . .	1835–1838
John McReynolds	. . .	1838
Andrew Sparrowhawk	. . .	1838–1839
Samuel Gelston	. . .	1838–1845
William John Doyle Charles Blackwood	. . .	1845–1847
Charles Blackwood	. . .	1847–1855
John Hamilton	. . .	1855–1856
James Nesbitt	. . .	1856–1882
James L. Hamilton (*Joint Secy.*)		1881–1884
William M. Wilson,	do.	1882–1890
John C. Hunter,	do.	1884–1890
David Cooke,	do.	1890–1896
John Frame,	do.	1890–1896
William Marshall,	do.	1896–1909
John Williamson,	do.	1896–1914
Melville McGown,	do.	1911–1924
James McCance,	do.	1916
William John Young,	do.	1921

SABBATH-SCHOOL

Superintendents

Wm. John Doyle.
V. A. Williams.
Wm. Macaulay.
John Woods.
John Williamson.
Dr. S. E. A. Acheson.
Wm. Moorehead.
Alex. K. Macbeth.
John McAlery.

Secretaries

Wm. McMeekin.
John C. Hunter.
S. E. A. Acheson.
Robt. T. Gray.
John Price.
Robt. C. G. C. Acheson.
Sydney Acheson.

Treasurers

John C. Hunter.
Arthur E. Moore.
John Williamson.

Editors of "The Greeting"

Wm. Moorehead.
Alex. K. Macbeth.
Robt. T. Gray.
Miss C. Irwin.
Andrew Beggs.

PRECENTORS

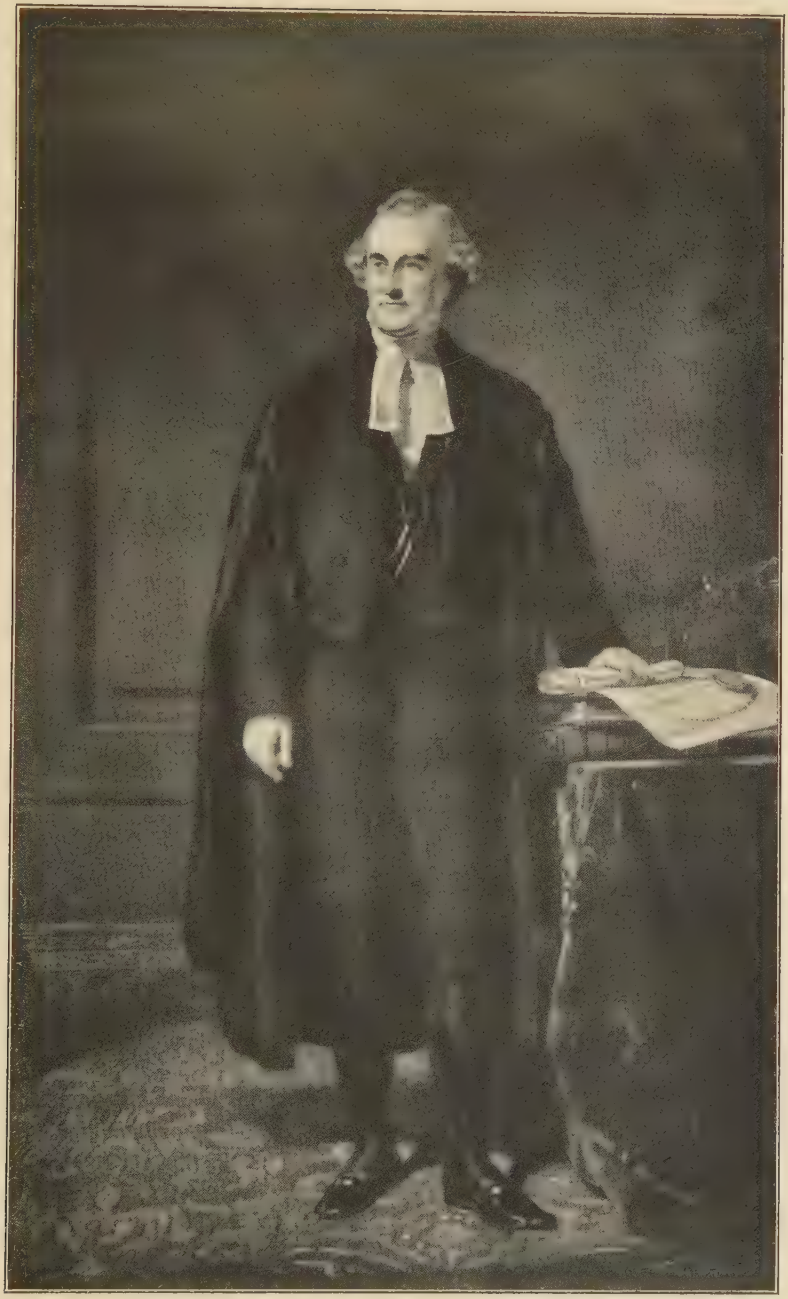
Mr. Cochran	1829–1830
John Crawford	1830–1837
Mr. Balmer	1837–1849
John Hanlon	1849–1856
John McDowell	1856–1886
Samuel Leighton	1886–1890
John Hemmingway	1890–1896
Samuel Leighton	1896–1920

ORGANISTS

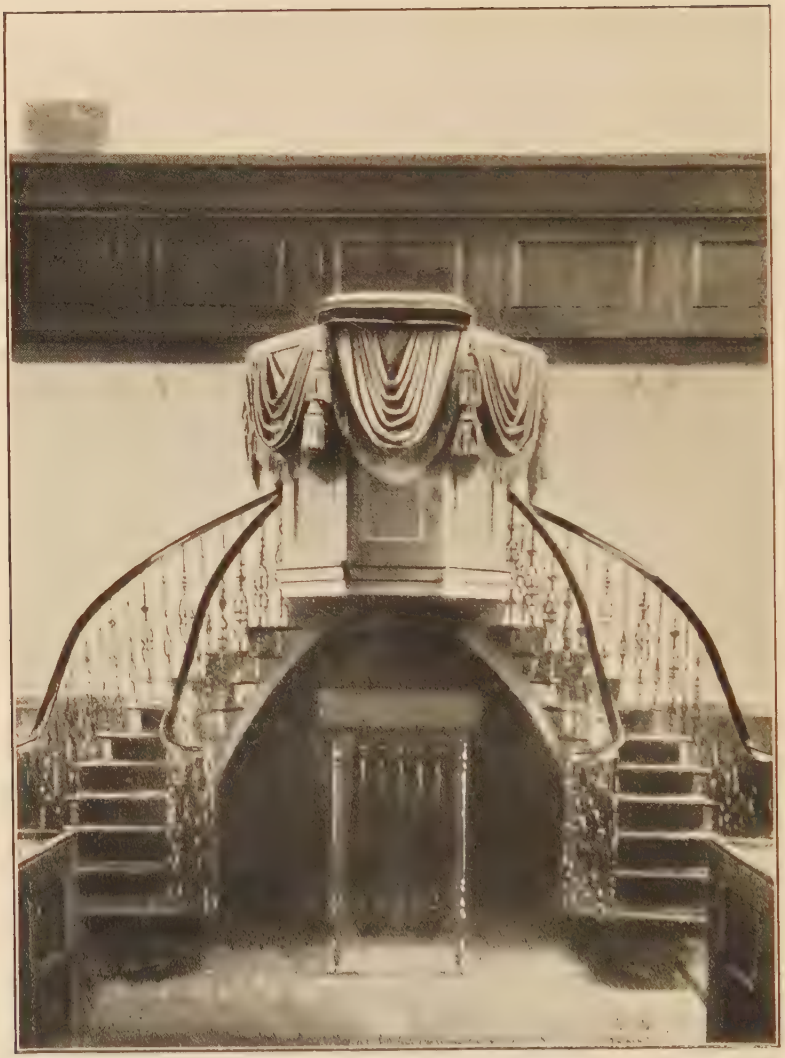
Samuel Leighton	1903–1920
Miss F. M. Shepperd, L.R.A.M.	1920

CHURCH OFFICERS

Robert Gilmore	1829–1848
Hugh Cruiks	1848–1870
John Lindsay	1870–1875
James Kennedy	1875–1912
Joseph Hope	1907–1911
James Stewart	1911



Rev. Henry Cooke, D.D., LL.D.



Dr. Cooke's Pulpit

CHAPTER I

RULES

THE minister, trustees, committee, and congregation do hereby declare that they have made and adopted the following Rules for the government of said church:

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES.

RULE 1ST.—That the said church, and congregation worshipping therein, are to be always in connexion with and subject to the General Synod of Ulster.

RULE 2ND.—That every minister who shall be called to officiate therein shall be one holding and teaching the doctrines of the Trinity, Sacrifice and Atonement of our Saviour, the renewal of believers by the power of the Holy Ghost, and of Justification by Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as these doctrines are explained in the answers to the 6th, 25th, 31st, 33rd, and 35th questions of the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Divines.

RULE 3RD.—Should it ever appear by decision of the Presbytery under whose care said church now is, or may hereafter be placed, that any minister who may at any time be appointed pastor of said Presbyterian Church hath opposed, contradicted, or denied all or any of the aforesaid doctrines as declared in Rule 2nd, or hath in his sermons neglected to teach and inculcate the same, he shall henceforth cease to be minister of said church, and forfeit all right or

claim to administer any of the concerns or receive any of the emoluments thereof.

RULE 4TH.—That the minister, trustees, committee, and congregation do hereby, for themselves and successors, agree to submit any differences that may at any time arise between them, or any of them, to the decision of the Presbytery under whose care the said church now is, or may hereafter be placed, and the said decision shall be final, subject to no other jurisdiction than an appeal to the General Synod of Ulster.

OF THE COMMITTEE.

RULE 5TH.—That Adam John Macrory, John Workman, Dougal Macpherson, Thomas O'Neill, and Andrew Gilmore, together with seven others to be hereafter elected by the congregation, shall be a Committee of Management, and shall continue in office so long as they shall be accountable for any debts contracted in the building of said church.

RULE 6TH.—That the committee be, and they hereby are, invested with full power in their own name or that of the trustees to raise any sum (if necessary) by way of loan on said premises, to be employed in discharging the debts thereof; and to manage all matters relating to the buildings and repairs; and to the sale and letting of pews; and to the receipt, application, and disbursement of the funds; and to the use of the church for any meetings except the ordinary meetings for worship; and to all other temporal concerns thereof, subject nevertheless to the clauses and conditions in the original lease of said premises.

RULE 7TH.—That no person shall be eligible as a member of committee except he shall be in full communion in said church and pay an annual stipend of at least thirty shillings.

Rule 8th.—That every new member added to the present committee shall become a joint security for any debt that may remain upon the premises; nor shall any new member be entitled to act on the committee until he shall have agreed to become one of the said joint securities.

Rule 9th.—The congregation or committee may at any time remove any member of committee by releasing him from any liability on account of the church debt.

Rule 10th.—The committee shall annually submit to the congregation a full statement of the church accounts.

Rule 11th.—So soon as the debt shall be discharged a new committee shall be elected annually on the first Monday in May, agreeably to the regulations of the General Synod of the election of ministers.

Of Pews and Stipend.

Rule 12th.—Upon sale of any pew the committee shall grant a certificate, to be signed by the chairman and secretary, as follows:—

Presbyterian Church,
May Street, Belfast.

This Debenture witnesseth that..... has paid £..... sterling, and is hereby entitled to Pew No..... in said church, subject to the annual stipend rent of £....., and subject to such rules as are now or hereafter may be made for the management of said church.

.....*Chairman of Committee.*
.....*Secretary.*

Rule 13th.—Purchasers of pews may dispose of the same by will or sale; in case of sale the first offer shall be to the committee at the original cost. No transfer by will, sale, or otherwise shall be deemed

legal unless registered within six months after in the books of committee.

Rule 14th.—No alteration shall be made in any pew, except the additions of cushions and linings, which are always to be the same colour as the drapery of the pulpit. Should injury be done to any pew, it is to be repaired by committee at the expense of the occupier.

Rule 15th.—All stipend shall be payable twelve months in advance; six months' arrears (one fortnight's notice of the same having been personally given or affixed to the pew) shall be deemed a total forfeiture.

Of Church Accommodation for the Poor.

Rule 16th.—That every facility for attending public worship may be afforded the poor, the minister shall be invested with power to lend such sums of money as will enable any of them whom he considers attentive to religious duties to pay their annual stipend to the committee, and the committee shall refund to the minister from year to year the sums so lent by him, without asking the names of the persons.

Of New Regulations.

Rule 17th.—Should the minister, trustees, committee, or congregation wish to modify any original law (except Rules 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, which are fundamental and unalterable), or propose a new law, notice of their intention shall be given to the congregation at least eight days previous to the day fixed for its consideration; and provided two-thirds of the congregation agree thereto, it shall be considered binding to all intents and purposes.

A new Rule was adopted by the congregation on 27th November, 1831:—

Rule 18th.—That so much of Rule 8 as requires

new members of committee to become joint securities for the church debts be dispensed with, and that all persons who have purchased, or may hereafter purchase, pews be appointed to manage the temporal affairs of the church, either by themselves or by a particular delegation from their own body. Provided always that no act of theirs shall tend to diminish the security of the original church debt until the same be liquidated, or the present committee be relieved from the responsibility.

The five persons mentioned in Rule 5th were known as the original members of committee, and on 6th December, 1831, the following seven were elected to act in conjunction with them: Samuel Gelston, David Shaw, John Cordukes, John Wallace, Robert Martin, John Kirkpatrick, Jun., and John Duffield.

On 10th October, 1834, Rule 5th was altered, and the number of those elected to act with the original members was increased from seven to sixteen. The legal number of the committee thus became 21, but for some years this number was exceeded, and, when the irregularity was pointed out, those who had served longest on the committee were made ex-officio members. When the ex-officio members passed away the committee was reduced to the legal number. On 5th February, 1924, the number of members was increased to 24.

CHAPTER II

Belfast a Century ago—Erection of May Street Church.

THE following description of Belfast was given by Dr. Cooke in a speech delivered in 1841 in support of the Legislative Union of Great Britain and Ireland, and against the efforts to effect its repeal:—

"Look at Belfast. When I was myself a youth I remember it almost a village. But what a glorious sight does it now present: the masted grove within our harbour—our mighty warehouses teeming with the wealth of every climate—our great manufactories lifting themselves on every side—our streets marching on, as it were, with such rapidity that an absence of a few weeks makes us strangers in the outskirts of our own town. And all this we owe to the Union. No, not all—for throned above our fair town, and looking serenely from our mountain's brow, I behold the genii of Protestantism and Liberty, sitting inseparable in their power; while the genius of Industry, which nightly reclines at their feet, starts with every morning in renovated might, and puts forth his energies and showers down his blessings on the fair and smiling land.

"Well, before the Union, Belfast was a village; now it ranks with the cities of the earth. Before the Union it had a few coasting craft, and a few American and West Indian ships; and that open bay, which now embraces the navies of every land, was but a desert of useless water. The centre of our town was studded with thatched cottages, where now stands one of the

fairest temples to the genius of industry and commerce. Our merchants, then unknown, are now welcomed in every land; and the energy of their industry, and the profits of their toils, are only surpassed by their honourable character—the basis of their prosperity and the charter of its continuance."

In a plan of the town published in 1823 the boundaries are virtually the River Lagan on the east; George's Street on the north; Carrickfergus Street (now North Queen Street), Carrick Hill (now Upper Library Street), Brown Square, Millfield, Barrack Street, and Durham Street on the west; Donegall Square South and May Street on the south. Outside these confines there are very few buildings shown, although the ground is marked out in regular streets—a manifest token of the faith of the inhabitants in the future extension and prosperity of the town. The river was spanned by the Long Bridge—840 feet—which occupied the site of the Queen's Bridge; and on the County Down side there were vitriol works, salt works, glass works, and Coates' foundry. The principal buildings shown are the new barracks, Carrickfergus Street; the King's Stores, on the site of which the Old Town Hall was afterwards built (the Town Hall previously being situated where Messrs. Cantrell & Cochrane's premises now stand); the House of Correction, where Messrs. Fulton's warehouse and the PresbyterianWar Memorial Hostel now stand; the Poor House, at the head of Donegall Street; the White Linen Hall, on the present site of the City Hall; the House of Industry, in Smithfield, on behalf of which Dr. Cooke preached in Belfast on the 18th December, 1814, from the text, Proverbs iii. 27: "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." The sermon made a profound impression, and was published by request. The Presbyterian Historical Society possesses a copy of this sermon.

The church buildings at this period were St. Anne's,

Donegall Street, and a Chapel of Ease in High Street, afterwards St. George's, for the accommodation of Episcopalians. First and Second Congregations, Rosemary Street, were Unitarian. The latter congregation migrated to Elmwood Avenue in after years. It is noteworthy that this body has added but two congregations in Belfast to its number in the past hundred years, during which time the population has increased tenfold, whilst the orthodox Presbyterians have now fifty-nine congregations in the Belfast Presbytery. The orthodox congregations at that time were Rosemary Street and Donegall Street (now Cliftonville). There were also two congregations in connection with the Secession Synod—one in Berry Street, which in 1839 built a church in Linenhall Street, and in later years again removed to the Crescent. The Second Secession Church was in Alfred Street, and it also removed, being now Fitzroy Avenue Church. Rosemary Street Church was founded in the year 1723 by evangelicals who were dissatisfied with the doctrines taught in the First and Second Congregations, the population of the town being then between 7,000 and 8,000; and although the population had increased to over 40,000 in the next hundred years, there had been only one small church built in the interval for the accommodation of orthodox Presbyterians; so that in 1823 the situation had become acute, and a memorial was drawn up and largely signed, and presented to the Belfast Presbytery on 5th August, 1823, declaring the necessity for the erection of another meeting-house, and asking the approbation and concurrence of the Presbytery, so that the application, which it was intended to make to the Synod at its next meeting, might be accompanied with the recommendation of the Presbytery. Rev. Samuel Hanna, D.D., then minister of Rosemary Street Church, moved "that the prayer of the memorial for the new erection be granted." The matter came before the Synod of

Ulster, met at Moneymore on 31st December, 1823, and it was moved, seconded, and agreed to that the prayer of the memorial be granted, and that the intended congregation be placed under the care of the following ministers: Henry Henry, Alex. Patterson, Robt. Stewart, Henry Cooke, William Glendy, William Craig, and James A. Reid.

A site was obtained in Fisherwick Place, and the foundation-stone was laid on 23rd June, 1824. There was considerable delay in completing the building, and it was not until 23rd September, 1827, that the house was opened, Rev. Thomas Chalmers, D.D., preaching on the occasion. On the 17th August, 1828, a unanimous call was given to Rev. James Morgan, although some members had wished the Rev. Henry Cooke to be their minister. These, however, offered no opposition to the wishes of the majority; but immediately after the installation of Mr. Morgan in Fisherwick Place Church, which took place on 4th November, a deputation composed of those who were favourable to Rev. Henry Cooke waited on the Presbytery at a meeting held on 10th November, 1828, asking permission to erect a fourth orthodox Presbyterian Church, of which Mr. Cooke might be minister. The request was granted, the newly-installed minister of Fisherwick Place Church supporting it. Indeed there ever existed the most cordial sympathy and active co-operation between these two brethren. Dr. Morgan, speaking of Dr. Cooke in 1849, said: "I have been now intimately connected with Dr. Cooke for a period of thirty years. The first ten years of that time has been spent in different localities. The last twenty we have lived together in the same town—I may say in the same street. We have prayed together—we have preached together—and during the whole of that time there never was a shadow of a misunderstanding between us. Well do I recollect when I received the call to become the minister of that congregation over which

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I still preside; and when my mind was much agitated as to the propriety of accepting it, it was the counsel of Dr. Cooke, who then took occasion to address to me an earnest and lengthened letter, that mainly determined me to undertake the charge. It is probable that he has forgotten it—I never have, for his letter and counsel made an impression on my mind which has never yet been removed from it. I can only say in return that I was not warm in my own pulpit until my heart was delighted to understand that there were so many attached friends to Dr. Cooke in Belfast, and so many earnest adherents to the truth, and so many grateful to him for the honourable and noble part he had taken in maintaining the truth—when there were few to stand up for it—that it was resolved that, in addition to that new church to which I came, there should be another erected expressly for his ministry."

At the meeting of the General Synod at Lurgan on 30th June, 1829, the Belfast Presbytery reported that an application having been made to the Presbytery by a number of individuals residing in the town and neighbourhood of Belfast, to be erected into a congregation, and regular measures of inquiry having been adopted, the Presbytery complied with the prayer of the memorial.

When permission was granted to erect a new church, Adam J. Macrory, John Workman, Dougal Macpherson, and Andrew Gilmore leased from Henry Joy, at a rent of £54 1*s.* per annum, a piece of ground in May Street, 94 feet by 119 feet, which had been reclaimed from what was formerly the dam in connection with Cromac Paper Mill, popularly known as Joy's Dam.

The above-named lessees, together with Thomas O'Neill, signed a letter addressed to Rev. Henry Cooke, engaging to pay him a stipend of £300 per annum; and these five were the original members of committee.

The following is a description of the church, given

in McComb's Presbyterian Almanack and Christian Remembrancer for the year 1841:—

"May Street Presbyterian Church was opened by the Rev. Dr. Cooke in 1829, and affords accommodation for 1,700 sitters, and cost upwards of £6,500. There are two school-rooms occupied on the Sabbath, and capable of accommodating 200 children, with site for additional rooms and manse.

"This splendid edifice has the principal front in May Street, with one of its sides facing into Alfred Street. The superstructure is raised on framed foundations. The front is of modern or Scammozzian Ionic, having two columns and four pilasters 28 ft. high and fluted. The columns and interior pilasters form a piazza 36 feet long and 7 feet wide, over which rises a beautiful pediment. The front of the building is finished with a regular architrave frieze and block cornice, which give it a light, pleasing, and, at the same time, imposing effect. Around the windows are moulded architraves. The entrance is approached by a flight of eight steps, the floor of the building standing considerably above the level of the street. The interior is finished in a superb style. The gallery is supported by ten whole and two half columns of cast iron, bronzed—being in the same style as those of the portico. The front of the gallery is mahogany, and elegantly panelled; its soffit, which is finished to correspond with the front of the gallery, projecting beyond the columns, and forming the segment of a circle. Behind the pulpit is a singing gallery, finished to correspond with the other; and over the vestibule is a large gallery, appropriated to the accommodation of the poor. The ceiling, which is divided into compartments, is decorated by a magnificent centre-piece, from which is suspended a gas lustre which gives light to the entire house. The screen behind the pulpit is beautifully painted in relief, and the entablature is supported by two fluted modern Ionic pilasters, and the frieze is tastefully ornamented

with foliage. The pulpit is a handsome octagon, springing from a stalk, the workmanship and material of which correspond with the gallery; at each side there is a flight of winding stairs, with cast-iron balusters, mahogany capping. The stairs leading to the gallery rise at each side of the vestibule, and are very capacious and of easy ascent. The outside of the house measures 92 feet in length and 67 feet in width; the interior, 71 feet by 62 feet."

The plans from which the building was constructed were those of Mr. W. Smith, architect. The contractor was John Brown, and the amount of the original contract was £4,400, but additions and extras added materially to the cost. The building was very substantially constructed, and the contract was expeditiously carried out. As a means of raising money, pews were sold at prices ranging from £10 to £32, and there were some forty-three purchasers, to whom debentures were issued for the amount each paid. These debentures did not entitle the holders to the free use of the pew, but abatement was made in the seat rent amounting to 5 per cent. annually on the amount of the purchase price. The sum realised by the sale of pews was £958; in addition, subscriptions were received amounting to £737; collections at opening services amounted to £160, and a sum of £210 was received at special services conducted by Rev. Edward Irving on 20th September, 1830. However, there still remained a debt of £3,600, which was a heavy burden on the congregation for over twenty years.

Within a year from the signing of the contract the church was ready for opening, and on the 18th October, 1829, the Rev. Henry Cooke conducted the opening services, and preached from the text, Psalms lxxvii., verse 3: "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." Though the admission was by ticket, and though every effort was made to prevent undue pressure, the streets around the church were filled

hours before the time appointed for worship. When the doors were opened every seat and passage was immediately occupied, and many leading public men who had come from a distance were compelled to leave, not being able to approach the doors. A report of the sermon states: "After an eloquent introduction descriptive of the privileges and glory of the Jewish dispensation, and the circumstances in virtue of which peculiar honour was ascribed to Jerusalem, Mr. Cooke applied the doctrine of the text to the case of the New Testament Zion—to the statement of its distinctive privileges and the consequent duty of its denizens. The subject was illustrated in a masterly manner, and with that earnestness and power of persuasion for which Mr. Cooke is distinguished. We do not attempt an outline of this able discourse, simply because, in our limited space, we would be unable to do justice to it: and to offer any lengthened eulogium on the merits of the preacher, as a man of first-rate talents and an orator, would be little short of affectation in regard to one whose celebrity is not confined to this country."

A month later Dr. Cooke was installed, and the following appears in the minutes of the General Synod of Ulster, met at Omagh on the 27th June, 1830:—

"The Belfast Presbytery reported that on 24th November last they installed in charge of the newly-erected congregation, May Street, Belfast, the Rev. Henry Cooke, who adhered to his subscription of the Westminster Confession of Faith."

CHAPTER III

Henry Cooke—Early Days—Arian Controversy—Honours—Financial Struggles.

HENRY COOKE was born on the 11th May, 1788, in the farmhouse of Grillagh, a mile and a half north of Maghera, Co. Derry. His father, a sturdy and independent yeoman, was descended from a family of English Puritans. Cooke tells us of one of his forefathers who, when all the other members of his family were murdered at the outbreak of the rebellion, escaped with one child in his arms, and in company with other Protestants fled to Derry and took part in the defence of that city during the famous siege. "When he mounted guard at night he had no nurse or caretaker for his little one, so he carried him with him to the walls and laid him between the embrasures, where the cannon frowned defiance on James and slavery. Providence protected the boy in the midst of famine and death; and when, in after years, he was asked how he fared for shelter, 'Well enough,' was the reply; 'I had the shelter of my father's gun.' Yes; God—the God of battles—protected the motherless and homeless boy; and he who now addresses you is that boy's descendant."

Cooke's mother, Jane Howe, was of Scotch extraction, and was a woman of remarkable energy and decision of character. Being an only child she inherited her father's farm, the income from which materially aided in the education of her son. Henry was the youngest of four children, and he owed much to his

mother's careful and anxious training. His first school was about a mile from his father's house, and it was conducted in a thatched cottage, with a peat fire burning in the middle of the floor and a hole in the roof to serve for a chimney. The teacher, who was a strict Scotch Presbyterian, made religion an essential part of a boy's education. The Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, psalms and catechism, had to be learnt by all.

When he was about ten years of age Cooke was transferred to a classical school in Tobermore, about five miles by road from Grillagh. Cooke usually took a more direct route over a bog and across a ford of the River Moyola, which he crossed on stilts, concealing them on the opposite bank. On one occasion, on returning from school, he was unable to locate them owing to a snow-storm, so he attempted to ford the river, but he was carried off his feet by the swollen torrent, and being unable to swim he was almost drowned before he managed to regain the bank which he had left. He was thoroughly drenched, but he set out to tramp six miles through a blinding snow-storm in order to reach his home, where he arrived after nightfall in a very exhausted condition.

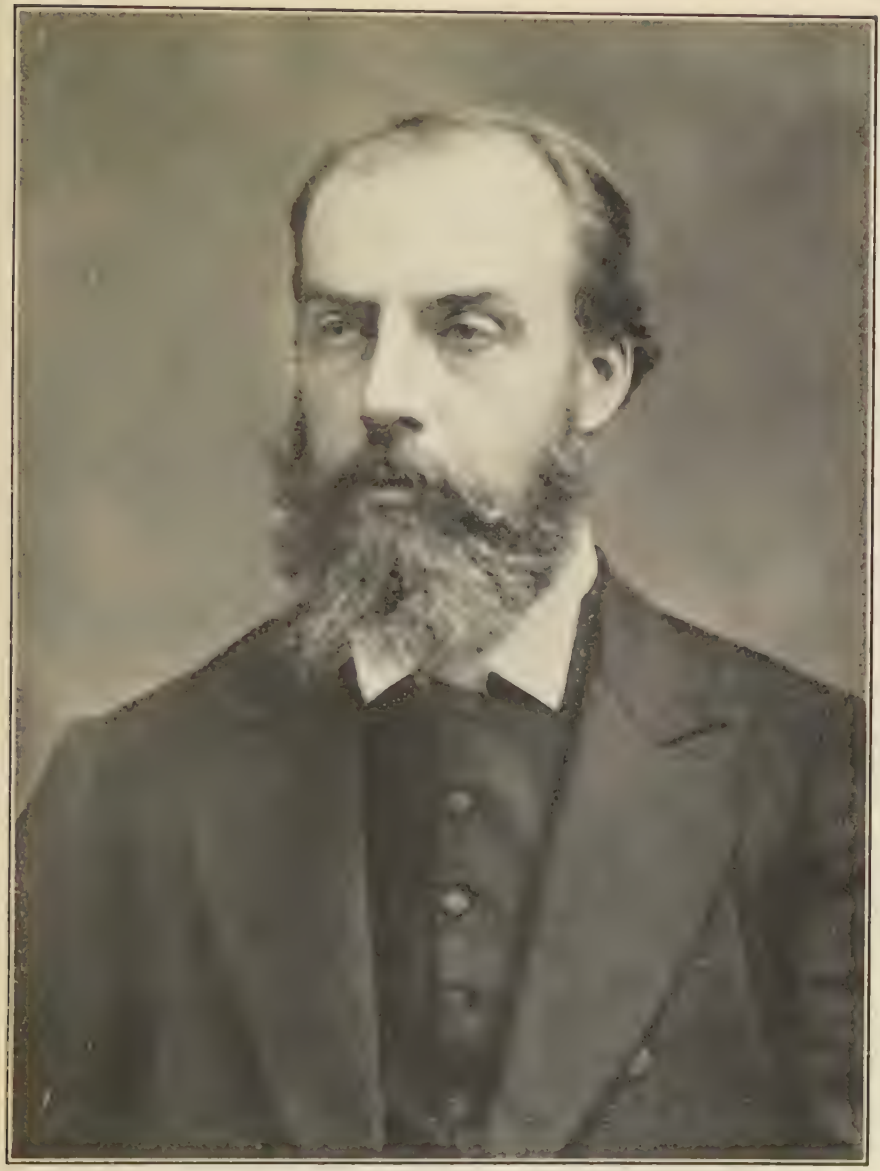
At the age of fourteen he entered the University of Glasgow. To reach the latter city from his home he had to walk sixty miles to Donaghadee, cross by mail packet to Portpatrick, and complete the journey to Glasgow on foot. This he did periodically for some years, but generally in the company of fellow-students.

At Glasgow he met for the first time two men with whom he came into close contact in after years: one was Robert Stewart, his staunch and able ally in his conflict for the truth; and the other, Henry Montgomery, his great opponent in the controversy which ended in freeing our Church from Arianism.

On the conclusion of his college course he was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Ballymena,

and on 10th November, 1808, he was ordained to the pastoral oversight of the congregation of Duneane, where he laboured with great zeal and earnestness for two years. His efforts, however, met with little encouragement, and he resigned his charge to accept a tutorship at Kells. When at this place he was suddenly called upon to undertake a heavy and responsible duty, and his successful discharge of the same at once proved his readiness and his ability. He was present at a Communion Service at Connor. The officiating minister had invited two brethren to assist him, as there were usually seven tables and an address of half an hour's length at each. The two brethren were both prevented from attending, and during the preliminary service the minister himself took ill. To prevent disappointment to the large congregation, the elders, with some hesitation, invited Mr. Cooke to continue the service. To this he at once consented, and delivered address after address with ease and fluency, and with such fervour as made a lasting impression upon his hearers. When we remember that he was but 22 years of age at this time, such an effort is most remarkable.

On 22nd January, 1811, he was installed in the congregation of Donegore, and here he found the people as destitute of spiritual life as those of Duneane. In the Presbytery there was not a man who thoroughly sympathised with him. Sermons preached by him in the district attracted attention, and he set himself to rouse the Church out of its lethargy. To this end he entered on a further course of study, and in October, 1815, he obtained leave of the Presbytery to attend lectures in the University of Glasgow for a session; and again, in the autumn of 1817, he was permitted to enter Trinity College, Dublin. He also attended medical classes at the Royal College of Surgeons, and walked the hospitals. During his residence in the South he undertook services in Carlow, with the result



Rev. John Samuel MacIntosh, M.A., D.D.

Rev. Robert John Lynd, D.D.

that a congregation was organised, of which the Rev. James Morgan was the first minister.

On 6th January, 1818, he resigned his charge at Donegore, having accepted a call to Killyleagh, Co. Down; and for the next ten years he was engaged in active controversy with the leaders of the Unitarian party. In 1824 he was elected Moderator of the Synod, and severe attacks were made upon him on account of evidence which he had given before a Royal Commission on the state of education in Ireland. At the meeting of Synod in 1825, although opposed by the Arians, he was vindicated by an overwhelming vote, and the first fatal blow was given to Arianism. In 1827 the Synod met at Strabane, and Cooke resolved upon a decisive step. A resolution proposed by him contained the following: "We do most firmly hold and believe the doctrine, 'That there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.'"

The question was put to the house, "Believe the doctrine or not." Each member was directed to stand up when recording his vote. 117 ministers and 18 elders voted "believe"; 2 ministers voted "not"; 4 ministers withdrew, and 8 declined to vote. The following year those who had not been present at the previous meeting were required to express their belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. 38 ministers and 59 elders answered "believe"; 4 ministers and 14 elders "not"; 3 ministers and 2 elders declined to answer. This virtually closed the long struggle, for the Unitarian party declined to attend a special meeting of Synod summoned to meet at Cookstown on 18th August, 1829, and their official connection with the Synod was finally dissolved. Cooke had obtained his object without any resolution of expulsion being passed. His biographer says: "The importance of the work he accomplished cannot be overestimated. Presbyterianism

in Ireland had fallen asleep long before he entered the ministry. The Church, as a whole, was satisfied with a cold observance of the routine of worship. There was no power in the pulpit; there was no energy in the Synod; there was no spiritual life among the people. Missionary work, whether at home or abroad, was not thought of. The Church seemed indifferent to Christ's command and commission—'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' Cooke believed that, so long as Arianism existed in the Church, life and power could not be developed. Others feared that disruption would be fatal to the Church's social influence; and that Arianism, unrestrained by orthodox energy and zeal, would spread over the land. Cooke's opinions were different. He had faith in the power of a pure gospel. He had faith in the promises of God. He knew that the dogmas of Arianism would not satisfy the wants of a thoughtful community. The result proved that he was right."

At a meeting of the Board of Jefferson College in April, 1829, it was resolved "that the degree of Doctor of Divinity be conferred upon Rev. Henry Cooke on account of high attainments in literature and science, and zealous earnestness in the promotion of evangelical truth." This honour was highly prized by Dr. Cooke, and it shows the interest which friends in America took in the great struggle which had convulsed the Church in Ireland for years. Some time later the Board of Trinity College, Dublin, asked his acceptance of "the honorary degree of LL.D. in this University, as the expression of our admiration of the talents with which you have so successfully cleared from heterodoxy the branch of the Protestant Church in Ireland over which you preside, and of the ability with which you have defended the Establishment." But perhaps the most remarkable honour paid to him was that conferred by the Corporation of the City of Dublin, when, on 6th February, 1839, in Common Council assembled,

it was resolved "that the freedom of this city be granted to the Rev. Dr. Cooke, of the Synod of Ulster, in consideration of the zeal which he has long manifested in support of pure religion."

After Dr. Cooke's settlement in the congregation, May Street Church soon became popular; large crowds being attracted by the eloquence of the preacher, and the fame of the church spread far and wide. The services of the minister were largely called upon for the opening of new churches, not only in Ireland, but also in Scotland and England.

Dr. Cooke twenty years later stated, "I feel that, while I have been to a great extent the servant of the general Church, I have been far too little the minister of this church—in a word, that the circumstances which have often compelled me to be so much the public minister, have, at the same time, disabled me from being equally the parish minister; and that while, to the best of my abilities, I have been serving the interests of others, I have been necessarily, unavoidably—I should almost say culpably—negligent of yours. Still, you have borne with me; you have been willing to lend, to dedicate me to the public cause, even when your own local interests have suffered by your generosity."

Meanwhile the financial position of the congregation was far from satisfactory. John Workman and his son Robert took a leading part in the affairs of the congregation during its early history. The latter was the father of thirteen children, the eldest being John Workman, of Ceara; another was the Rev. Robert Workman, of Glastry; and the youngest was the late Frank Workman, one of the founders of Workman & Clark, Limited, and chairman of the committee of the Presbyterian War Memorial Hostel, towards which he gave very large donations.

Robert Workman acted as secretary and treasurer of the congregation, and his father advanced large

sums of money in connection with the building. Several other members had advanced smaller sums, but after some time the debt was consolidated, and John Workman became the only creditor, the amount due to him being £3,700. He was anxious to have this loan secured by a mortgage on the building, but some difficulty arose before he was able to get this security. There was no deed of trust, and Andrew Gilmore, one of the lessees, refused to sign such a deed unless he was relieved of his responsibility in regard to the guarantee for Dr. Cooke's salary. It was agreed to ask Dr. Cooke to release him, then Mr. Workman also demanded to be released, so the proposal fell through. A further attempt to arrange matters was frustrated owing to Mr. Gilmore's objection to the fundamental rules.

On 23rd April, 1835, it being reported to the committee that a sum of £225 was due to Dr. Cooke, which the treasurer stated that he had handed over to his father without the direction of the committee, it was resolved that a treasurer and secretary be now appointed in lieu of Mr. Robert Workman. Mr. John Potts was appointed treasurer, and acted in that capacity for a period of four and a half years, and, after an interval of five years, for a further period of ten years. It was the custom in those days to present half-yearly statements, and those prepared by Mr. Potts would do credit to a modern accountant. Mr. Thomas Sparrowhawk was, at the same time, appointed secretary, and discharged the duties very efficiently. Robert Workman dissented from this resolution, and refused to hand over the books belonging to the congregation. Strained relations continued for some time, but at length an agreement was reached, the books being returned, and a mortgage was signed by A. J. Macrory, Dugald Macpherson, and John Workman, as lessees of May Street Church, to Robert Workman, Junior, as trustee for John Workman for

the money he advanced for the church. The amount, including interest to the 12th October, 1837, was £3,670. The agreement provided that interest be paid at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum; that £100 per year be paid in reduction of the principal; that when the debt on the church is reduced to £2,000, interest on same be at the rate of 5½ per cent. per annum; that Mr. Workman pay Mr. Gilmore £100 on relinquishing all claim on and interest in the church; that Mr. Workman take no proceedings so long as such payments are punctually made.

After the debt was entirely liquidated, it was reported to the committee that the interest paid to Mr. Workman amounted to £3,819 12*s.* 8*d.*

The stipend, which at this period averaged over £400 per annum, was collected by various members of committee, and the work would appear to have been very inefficiently done, as in April, 1835, it was reported that the arrears amounted to £319 3*s.* 1½*d.* Two years later we find five persons attending a meeting of committee by request, and consenting to assist the committee in collecting stipend. One of these five was William John Doyle, who afterwards acted as superintendent of the Sabbath-school for 20 years, and to whose memory there is a tablet erected in the school-room. Mr. Doyle also acted as secretary of the congregation for a short period.

In January, 1841, Dan O'Connell visited Belfast to address a meeting in favour of the repeal of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. As soon as his intention was known, Cooke issued a challenge to debate the subject publicly with the noted Repealer. The challenge was not accepted, and O'Connell on his visit to Belfast found the populace so hostile to his policy that he had some fears for his personal safety, and he departed hurriedly under military escort for Donaghadee, where he embarked to the accompaniment of a piper playing the air, "We'll gang nae mair

to yon toun." Cooke's victory was complete, and the Repeal movement had got its death blow as far as Ulster was concerned. A few days afterwards two great loyalist demonstrations were held, attended by the most notable and influential people of the Province, at which Cooke was one of the chief speakers; and his services in this connection were recognised by a public testimonial, by which the sum of £2,000 was raised and presented to his family. The same year Cooke was elected Moderator of the General Assembly, which had been formed the previous year by the union of the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod. A few days after the meeting of the Assembly a marble bust of Dr. Cooke was presented to the congregation. The idea originated with Mr. J. Emerson Tennent, then Member of Parliament for Belfast, who was closely associated with Dr. Cooke in his political activities. He had commissioned Mr. Patrick MacDowell, a local artist of some eminence, to execute the work. He had been willing to bear the entire cost, but when the friends of Dr. Cooke in London, Manchester, Dublin, and Belfast learnt of the project, many were anxious to have their names associated in the matter. The bust is considered a fine work of art, and was exhibited at the Royal Academy, London, in the year 1838.

In 1842, the debt being then £3,500, it was resolved to raise a sum of £500 in reduction of same. This was successfully accomplished before the close of the year, mainly through collections taken at special services, conducted in the church on 28th August by Rev. Thos. Chalmers, D.D., at which the sum of £322 12*s*. was realised. The preacher's text on the occasion was, "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you."

On the 3rd September, 1844, Rev. Thomas Guthrie, of Edinburgh, preached in the church, when collections amounting to £196 12*s*. 3½*d*. were received.

CHAPTER IV

Disruption of Church of Scotland—Rev. John Meneely, D.D.—Death of John Workman—Dr. Cooke appointed Professor and President of Assembly's College—Continued as Constant Supplier of May Street Pulpit—Church free of Debt.

In the reign of Queen Anne an Act had been passed restoring patronage in Scotland, and under it many clergymen who were unwelcome had been appointed to church livings. In 1834 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed a Veto Act, which declared that no minister should be intruded into a parish church against the will of the people. This brought the ecclesiastical and civil powers into conflict, and in 1842 a judgment was given by the House of Lords, affirming a decree of a civil court, which required a Presbytery to induct a minister to a certain parish without regard to the dissent of the parishioners. There was widespread agitation, and Cooke's sympathies, although he was strongly in favour of the Establishment, were with the non-intrusion party, and he used all his influence with the Government in London to introduce legislation to settle the matter, warning Sir Robert Peel, who was then Prime Minister, that at least 400 ministers would retire in case no relief bill were conceded. The Premier, however, had been assured by others that not more than twenty, or at most thirty, would secede, and those extreme men whom the Church could well spare. Matters were allowed to drift until the meeting of Assembly in May, 1843, when the Rev. Dr. David Welsh, the

Moderator for the preceding year, without constituting the Assembly, rose and addressed the Lord High Commissioner, pointing out that the civil courts had undue power of interference with the Established Church, and after laying on the table the famous protest, he bowed to the chair and withdrew, followed by a long line of ministers and elders. Cooke, although not a deputy, was present and joined in the historic procession. Dr. Chalmers was elected first Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, and Cooke was invited to address the Assembly, and expressed his full concurrence in the momentous step which had just been taken. The accuracy of his forecast was demonstrated by the fact that the deed of demission, or resignations of livings, was signed by 474 ministers and professors.

On the 5th February, 1838, there is a minute in the congregational records "that the treasurer be requested to pay Mr. Meneely the sum of eight pounds, being a balance due to him as visitant." Mr. Meneely, afterwards the Rev. John Meneely, D.D., of First Ballymacarrett, was a life-long friend of Dr. Cooke, and he rendered valuable assistance in raising funds towards the liquidation of debt on the church. The origin of the church in Ballymacarrett is thus described by Dr. Morgan: "When I made the suggestion to my friend (Dr. Cooke), he added, 'I will go and preach there, and see what can be done.' He went there, assembled the people, preached in the open air, and that was the beginning of the erection in Ballymacarrett, where the ministry of Mr. Meneely is one of the most enriching blessings that ever fell on any place or people." In 1845 the Rev. J. Meneely and the Rev. Joseph Mackenzie (of Malone), another close friend of Dr. Cooke, waited on the committee, and proposed that an effort should be made for the liquidation of the whole debt, amounting then to £3,000, and offered to proceed to England to collect

subscriptions for that purpose. Other ministers also lent their assistance; and the following year the treasurer reported that Dr. Cooke had waited upon him and authorised him to appropriate the sum of £25 per quarter out of his salary, towards the liquidation of the debt on the church. The result of these efforts was that, in November, 1846, it was reported that the debt had been reduced to £2,000, and the interest on same was reduced from 6 per cent. to 5½ per cent. in accordance with the terms of the mortgage in favour of John Workman, who died that same year; and his son Robert soon afterwards severed his connection with the congregation, and became associated with Alfred Street Church, of which Rev. John Edgar, D.D., was minister. It was he who took the first step towards the erection of Elmwood Church by calling a meeting in his own house to consider the matter. He died 21st September, 1870, at the age of 65.

In September, 1847, Dr. Cooke was appointed Professor of Sacred Rhetoric and President of Assembly's College. Some time previously he had been appointed by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to the important office of agent for the Regium Donum, an appointment which was worth £320 per annum. The committee, in December, 1847, adopted the following resolution: "That the warm and cordial thanks of this committee be given to Dr. Cooke for his very liberal and munificent donation of one hundred pounds towards the liquidation of the debt due on this church, and still more so for his very kind and disinterested offer to continue his ministerial services to the congregation free of any emolument in respect of the stipend arising from the pew rents of the house." At Dr. Cooke's request a memorial was prepared for presentation to the Presbytery, which stated:—

"1st. That early in the month of November last the Rev. Dr. Cooke publicly intimated that from the

first of the month he had resigned all claim to the stipend of the congregation.

"2nd. That, so far as he was concerned, the congregation was at liberty to choose an assistant and successor.

"3rd. That, until they could come to a decision, he was willing to supply the pulpit and perform all the other duties within his power, entirely free from all charge to the congregation.

"4th. That, consequently, the stipend, until an assistant and successor should be chosen, might be turned to the liquidation of the debt.

"5th. That the only stipulation he made in return for his services was a right to the pulpit on each Sabbath day, so long as he was expected and consequently required to preach to the students of the General Assembly. To this stipulation the elders and committee, on the part of the congregation, have cordially assented.—They do now request the Presbytery to place them under the care of a local committee, with power to authenticate a poll list and take such steps as shall seem best for realising Dr. Cooke's proposals; and they further request that, until such time as the congregation be empowered to choose an assistant and successor, Dr. Cooke may be continued as constant supplier."

One effect of this change was that the Regium Donum was no longer available for the minister, as this ceased on his appointment as professor. After one year's trial of this arrangement, Dr. Cooke addressed the following letter to Mr. S. Gelston, who was then treasurer:—

"My Dear Sir,

May I request that you call a meeting of the elders and committee of May Street Church, and submit to them the following statement:—

"1. That I am anxious to ascertain their minds as to the future management of the church.

"2. That I am prepared to aid them by every means in my power to obtain a fixed minister, should that appear to them the best course for the interest of the church; or, if they think better, I am equally prepared to take no part, leaving the matter, as they have a right to require, altogether in their own hands.

"3. That I am willing to continue to do the duties of the congregation so long as they wish, or I remain able, and that without any stipend; but that, if offered, I would not receive any. And this I count no favour to them, as preaching is a pleasure to me, and I have, thank God, enough annually from other sources.

"4. That I wish the decision as soon as convenient, inasmuch as there are many things in the way of congregational duty that I should attempt were it settled what position I should hold, or that another should do were a choice made.

H. Cooke."

When this letter was submitted the meeting resolved that Dr. Cooke be requested to continue constant supplier, and that the warmest thanks be given to Dr. Cooke for his very kind and liberal offer to continue to officiate as the minister of May Street Church without any emolument.

On 31st August, 1848, an application from Mr. James Nesbitt for the use of the upper school-room in which to hold a meeting was granted, and the following year Mr. Nesbitt was elected a member of committee; and we are thus introduced to one who, until his death in 1882, gave devoted services to the congregation, and took a leading part in all its activities. He acted as secretary for a period of 26 years in addition to being session clerk.

On 22nd June, 1849, Dr. Cooke was made the recipient of a presentation, which took the form of a horse, car, and set of harness. Major Macpherson

presided over a large gathering, and complimentary speeches were made by Revs. Dr. Morgan, David Hamilton, and others. The following year it was reported that the debt was £1,800; and in February, 1851, a meeting was called by Dr. Cooke, who stated that his object in calling it was to express the great desire he had long felt that steps should be taken to pay off the entire debt of the church, which then amounted to £1,700. It was decided to make an effort, and in November it was announced that the sum of £1,494 had been raised, but it was not until January, 1853, that the church was entirely free of debt. The delay was partly caused by large expenditure on repairs to the church. A new heating apparatus had been installed, and as the roof was giving trouble it was decided to replace the copper on it with lead. This was in the year 1848, and this lead remained intact until the recent storm, on 23rd November, 1928, stripped the entire west side, when about one ton and a half was lifted by one gust of wind, and part of it carried a considerable distance—some of it through the roof of the school-room, and some of it on to the adjoining property. The lead on the east side of the roof is still in good condition after eighty years.

In November, 1853, it was reported by a sub-committee who had examined the roof that "the ends of the girder beams resting on the walls are much decayed, and in some instances nearly rotten." The church had to be closed for public worship whilst repairs were being effected, and during this time the congregation worshipped in Donegall Place Methodist Church, which was situated on the site of the shop, 10, Donegall Place, lately occupied by Messrs. Kyle & Cheyne. The defect in the roof was remedied by the ends of the beams being shod, for a length of about three feet, with heavy cast-iron shoes. At the same time the interior of the church was painted, and some alterations made in lighting.

Whilst these repairs and alterations were being carried out, the following minute appears under date of 20th April, 1854: "Resolved that Messrs. Lindsay and Potts be requested to take the opinion of Messrs. Boyd, Gregg & Entwistle as to the practicability of converting the lower part of the church into a suitable school-house, and, if so, the probable expense of same." There is no record of any report from those consulted, but it is interesting to note that sixty years later this very project was successfully accomplished, and thereby the church was furnished with additional suitable accommodation wherein to carry on work amongst the young. In the early days this basement had been known as the cemetery. There were two gateway entrances from Little May Street. One of these was afterwards closed up and the space utilised to enlarge the sexton's house. There were five vaults in the north end, directly under the vestibule of the church, and some interments had been made in these prior to the opening of the City Cemetery, one of Dr. Cooke's children, who died young, being amongst the number. When the basement was converted into a hall, one of the vaults was utilised for the stairway which at present leads to the school-room from the vestibule of the church. The openings to the other four, which were about a foot and a half wide and about 2 feet high, were built up, and are now concealed by the plaster. The sills of these openings were about 4 feet from old floor level, and about 6 feet 6 inches from present floor level.

In 1855 Mr. Thomas McCann and Mr. Hugh Porter were elected on the committee for the first time. Mr. McCann was appointed treasurer in 1864, and continued in office until his death in 1902. No man could have watched over the finances of the congregation with greater care, and his influence in the session and committee carried great weight. Members of his

family were greatly interested in Sabbath-school work, and for many years there was at least one member—and often two—on the teaching staff. His eldest daughter married Rev. J. G. Phillips, who, when a student, taught in the school, and was afterwards missionary to the Jews in Damascus. Their son, Walter, is a medical doctor at the port of Newchwang, and acts as honorary missionary in connection with our Foreign Mission.

CHAPTER V

Recognition of Dr. Cooke's gratuitous Services—Public Men connected with the Congregation—Noted Meetings held in the Church—Erection of School-room—Death of Dr. Cooke.

EARLY in the year 1855 it was reported that there was a balance in the hands of the treasurer, and it was proposed to insure Dr. Cooke's life and to present a sum of £300 to Mrs. Cooke; but some exception was taken to this course, and a sub-committee was appointed "to consider and report what funds, if any, belonging to the congregation are applicable to the order of this committee, and, if so, how the sum ought to be disposed of." It was not until 3rd January, 1856, that this sub-committee reported:—

"Your sub-committee appointed on 7th March last to consider and report as to the application of the funds in your treasurer's hands, after mature consideration, have come to the following conclusions, which they beg to submit and recommend:—

"That although Dr. Cooke has for many years ceased to receive stipend or any other emolument from the congregation, he has nevertheless continued to perform the ministerial duties with great zeal and efficiency.

"That owing to his valuable, disinterested, and gratuitous service the amount received from pew rents necessarily accumulated in the hands of your treasurer, and being supplemented by the subscriptions of the members, amongst whom Dr. Cooke was one of the largest donors, the large sum of £1,800 was ultimately realised, which paid off the balance of the church debt, with interest, that had so long pressed on it.

"Heavy repairs on the building being found necessary at this period, the subsequent pew rents were applied judicially to the payment of expenses thereby incurred, amounting to nearly £500. Your committee do not feel it necessary to make any special reference to the erection of a manse, as contemplated by you some years ago, and of which Dr. Cooke would have had the use free of charge, but which you are aware was not carried into effect.

"Your sub-committee recommend that the sum now in your treasurer's hands, amounting to about £400, be handed over to Dr. Cooke, with a request that he will accept it as a token of affection and esteem from those who enjoy the privilege of his profitable ministrations."

The recommendation of the sub-committee was adopted, and thereafter it was the practice that when the treasurer reported that he had £100 in hands, the amount was voted by the committee to Dr. Cooke.

On Sabbath, 30th December, 1855, collections were taken in aid of May's Market Sabbath-school, "amounting to £21 10*s.* 8*d.*, which sum was supplemented by a subscription of £2 from H. M. Cairns, M.P. for Belfast, through Mr. Charles Blackwood." Hugh McCalmont Cairns, who afterwards became Lord Chancellor of England with the title of Earl Cairns, was a member of the congregation and a teacher in the Sabbath-school, his father being a close friend of Dr. Cooke. Another member, Samuel Gibson Getty, was elected Mayor of Belfast in 1856. In later years other members also occupied the position of chief magistrate: John Browne, in 1879; James H. Haslett, in 1887, in which year he was knighted; and, after the town had been raised to the status of a city, Sir James Johnston, in 1917, with the official title of the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor. These four gentlemen in their time took an active interest in the

Rev. William John McCaughan

Rev. W. J. McCaughan
Pulpit with Platform

work of the congregation, and they rendered valuable assistance in the management of its affairs.

On 14th September, 1856, the Rev. R. S. Candlish, D.D., preached in the church, when collections were taken on behalf of Linenhall Street congregation. A letter of thanks was afterwards received from Rev. Robt. Knox, D.D., minister of that church, in which it is stated that they were within a few pounds of having the entire debt removed.

It would seem to have been the custom in those days to grant the use of the church for special sermons and lectures in the interests of other churches and organisations. On 1st March, 1839, it was granted for the observance of the Wesleyan Centenary. On 6th January, 1840, Rev. Dr. Symington, of Glasgow, preached. Applications for the use of the church became so numerous that the committee fixed a fee of £1 to cover the cost of gas used, and on some special occasions a charge of £3 was made. It was granted to the British Association in 1852; in November, 1857, the Y.M.C.A. had the use of it for a lecture by Rev. W. Arnot, of Glasgow; and in March following it was granted to Eglinton Street congregation for a sermon by Rev. Richard Smyth, D.D., of Londonderry, afterwards a Member of Parliament. Then, in July of the same year, the Young Men's Intellectual Improvement Association secured it for sermons and lectures by Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, from 17th to 21st August. In the same month a "Concert and Lecture" was advertised to take place in the church, for which the sanction of the committee had not been obtained. A deputation from College Square North congregation waited on the committee, and explained that tickets had been sold to more people than their own church would hold, and they expressed their regret that the advertisement had been inserted in the newspapers before consulting the committee of May Street Church. As Dr. Cooke was the lecturer

on the occasion, and the object was to reduce a debt of £500, the committee accepted the explanation and sanctioned the meeting. Then, in November of the same year, Father Gavazzi visited Belfast and delivered four lectures; the first in the Music Hall (now the Victoria Memorial Hall), on Wednesday, 3rd, on "The Pope and the Bible." The remaining three were delivered in May Street Church—one on Thursday, on "The Inquisition," at which Dr. Cooke presided; and two on Friday. The morning lecture was attended by a large and representative audience, and the subject was "Auricular Confession and Nuns." At the concluding lecture on Friday evening every portion of the spacious building was filled to inconvenience, and the subject dealt with was "The Capital Errors of Rome and their Supporters in these Countries." Rev. Hugh Hanna had charge of the arrangements in connection with this visit.

In 1855 a Presbyterian Young Men's Association had been formed, and Dr. Cooke had given a résumé of the history of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland at the inaugural meeting. This association was allowed the use of the church for two lectures by the Rev. Mr. Chone, on 18th and 19th January, 1859; and later in the year J. B. Gough delivered four lectures in the church under the auspices of the same association.

The Y.M.C.A. had the use of the church for two lectures by Rev. A. Mursell in December, 1858; and also for a sermon by Rev. W. Morley Punshon on 25th February, 1859. An application for the church by Rev. W. Begley, of Donegall Street Independent Church, for a sermon by Rev. H. Grattan Guinness on Thursday, 7th July, 1859, was granted.

A deputation from the General Assembly's students waited on the committee, requesting the use of the church for a lecture on Thursday, 1st February, 1860, by Mr. Lynd, on behalf of a Turkish student. The request was granted.

There was a return visit of J. B. Gough in 1860, under the auspices of the General Assembly's Temperance Association, when the use of the church was granted on the application of Mr. J. P. Corry (afterwards Sir J. P. Corry). Mr. S. Gelston, who was connected with the wine trade and had a place of business in Tomb Street, and Rev. John Mark, another member of committee, objected to the house being turned into a theatre by Mr. Gough's exhibition, but their objection was overruled. This incident marks a certain advance in temperance sentiment, as, although Dr. Cooke declined to have any toasts proposed at his installation, the use of the church was twice previously refused for temperance meetings. On the other hand, a proposal was made by Mr. Gelston in October, 1859, to rent the cellar under the church as a bonded warehouse, and after a lengthened discussion it was moved and unanimously passed "that, taking the whole matter into consideration, it is the opinion of this committee that at present it would not be desirable to give it for that purpose."

On 6th January, 1860, it was resolved that the use of the church be given to Alfred Place congregation on Thursday evening next, free of any charge for gas. Other public meetings must have been held in the church, of which there is no particular minute, as, on 22nd August, 1861, the secretary was instructed to apply to Rev. Drs. Gibson and Knox, Revs. Collins, Toye, and Macnaughten for the expenses connected with meetings held in the church.

From the Union of the Synod of Ulster with the Secession Synod in 1840, until the opening of the Church House and Assembly Hall in 1905, there were 47 meetings of the General Assembly held in May Street Church. At the meeting of the General Assembly in 1903 the following resolution was passed: "As this is probably the last meeting of the General Assembly to be held within the historic walls of May Street

Church, the General Assembly places on record its grateful appreciation of the readiness of the various ministers and office-bearers of May Street Church at all times to receive the Assembly in its annual session, and provide to the utmost of their power for the convenience of the Assembly." In 1863 the use of the church was granted for sermons by Rev. Wm. Nisbet, D.D., Edinburgh, and to Rev. John Weir, D.D., of London, for a public meeting on behalf of the Jews.

In December, 1893, the Rev. Dr. John G. Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides, visited Belfast and addressed a large audience in May Street Church. At a later date the Rev. John Watson, D.D., of Sefton Park, Liverpool, well known as "Ian Maclaren," author of "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush," preached in the church on behalf of Macrory Memorial congregation. The church was overcrowded on the occasion, and some of the special collectors who had been invited were unable to gain admission.

The lack of sufficient school room had been long felt, so in 1858 Mr. John Boyd, architect, who was a member of committee, was instructed to prepare plans and specifications for a school building on what was then vacant ground belonging to the church; and an estimate of £650 from Messrs. L. & T. Browne was accepted, and a further sum of £150 was agreed upon for additional buildings. Part of the cost was raised by subscriptions, but when the building was completed there was a sum of £500 due the contractors. After some time Mr. John Browne agreed to lend this amount to the committee for five years, on condition that he should receive promissory notes for £50 from ten members of committee. One of these notes was paid each half year until the debt was liquidated.

James H. Haslett was first elected on the committee on 1st February, 1861, and in the year 1863 the congregation suffered a severe loss through the deaths

of three of its leading members—John Potts, Charles Blackwood, and William John Doyle. The passing of these members must have made a deep impression on the minds of the other office-bearers, as there are no fewer than three different minutes regarding each of them. The two former were ruling elders, and for upwards of thirty years took an active part in promoting the spiritual and temporal welfare of the church. William John Doyle had not been so long connected with the congregation, but he had been for twenty years superintendent of the Sabbath-school, and he had manifested great zeal in endeavouring to maintain the weekly prayer-meeting. A marble tablet in the school-room bears testimony to the esteem in which he was held. When this memorial was erected, the bust of Dr. Cooke was transferred to its present position in the school-room.

Adam J. Macrory presided at the annual business meeting in 1863, 1864, and 1865. At the first of these he referred to the necessity for improvement in the psalmody; and on the two latter occasions he referred to the advisability of having elders appointed, and of taking steps to have the Regium Donum restored to the congregation. These meetings were all held on Monday at noon, and on some occasions meetings were held on a Saturday at the same hour. Mr. Macrory also advised that a considerable sum might be realised by letting the cellar under the church, and this matter was referred to Mr. Hugh Porter, who reported later that it would take a considerable sum to put the cellar in order before it could be let, and it was resolved that the matter be deferred for the present. Mr. Thos. H. Browne was first elected on the committee in 1864. In this year the church evidently suffered from riots, and Mr. A. J. Macrory was instructed to take the necessary steps to recover the amount of damage from the county. On 28th January, 1866, the use of the church was granted to the students for

sermons by Rev. Wm. Fleming Stevenson. In the same year there was a visitation of the congregation by the Presbytery of Belfast. On 8th November, 1866, it was resolved that the use of the school-room be given for a lecture by Rev. R. J. Lynd.

In April, 1867, the church officer, Mr. Hugh Cruiks, having been bereaved through the death of his wife and daughter, was made the recipient of a testimonial from the members of the church.

Dr. Cooke died on 13th December, 1868, and was buried in Balmoral Cemetery, where there is a monument to his memory. The funeral was one of the largest ever seen in Belfast.

The General Assembly at its meeting on 15th June, 1869, adopted the following minute: "In recording the lamented death of Dr. Henry Cooke, as reported by the Synod of Belfast, the Assembly feel called upon to declare their high estimate of his great work and eminent services, as well as their deep sense of the loss which this Church has sustained by his removal from among them. Having been gifted with natural talents of the highest order, and having cultivated them with much care and diligence, he became 'an able minister of the New Testament; an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures.' Whilst bowing in humble submission to Him who, in His sovereign wisdom, gives and takes away, the Assembly deem the present a fitting occasion for acknowledging with gratitude that one so highly gifted was raised up, strengthened, and sustained (with others whose memories are dear to this Church) for the purpose of leading back one important section of this Assembly to the 'old paths' of evangelical Presbyterianism; that in their revered and beloved father they could ever recognise a prudent and sagacious counsellor, able to guide in all times of peril and perplexity; that in the educational, missionary, and other evangelistic operations of the Assembly, he held a prominent and

honoured place; and that his wise counsel, active exertions, and powerful influence were always available for the furtherance of the best interests of this Church; and that, after he had served his generation, by the will of God he fell asleep at a good old age, and full of the hope of a glorious immortality through the merits of that Divine Saviour whom in his life he delighted to serve and honour."

CHAPTER VI

Call to Rev. J. S. MacIntosh—Renovation of Church Building—Erection of Manse — Mr. MacIntosh declined Call to St. Peter's, Glasgow—Visit to United States of America—Call to Philadelphia.

In October, 1867, a meeting was called to consider what steps should be taken regarding the appointment of a successor to Dr. Cooke, and the following month a poll list was prepared. The names of those entitled to vote, numbering 222, are entered on the minutes. As far as one can judge, the following families are the only ones still connected with the congregation which were represented on the first poll list: Pendrie, Williamson, Gray, Mitchell, Woods, McDowell, Haslett, and McQuiston.

In January, 1868, the committee met, and granted the use of the school-room to Mr. T. H. Browne for a reading by Mr. E. J. Cotton, manager of B. & N. C. Railway, and a popular elocutionist, in aid of Welsh Street School; and also the use of the church to Rev. H. Henderson for sermons by Rev. Mr. McDonnell, of Leith, in aid of First Holywood congregation. But the principal business of this meeting was the decision to call a meeting of the congregation for Thursday, 16th January, to receive the report of the session and committee, who had agreed to submit the name of the Rev. John Samuel MacIntosh to the meeting as successor to Dr. Cooke. There is no minute of the congregational meeting, and although the recommendation was not accepted unanimously, Mr.

MacIntosh received the necessary two-thirds majority, and he was duly installed by the Presbytery on 4th March, 1868.

Mr. MacIntosh was born in Philadelphia, U.S.A., on 30th September, 1839, and as a lad he attended the Sabbath-school of the First Reformed Church, of which the Rev. S. B. Wylie, D.D. was pastor. "Acting on the advice of a physician, his widowed mother went to Ireland in the hope that his health, which was causing some anxiety, might become robust. His uncle, Dr. Taylor, of Ballymoney, a distinguished physician, took a lively interest in the promising boy and superintended his education." He studied in Queen's College, Belfast, and afterwards, as a student in connection with the Eastern Reformed Church, in Scotland and Germany, gaining high honours in his course. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 1st July, 1862, and he began his ministry in Connor, a large congregation of almost one thousand families, on the 5th November of the same year. He was greatly respected and loved by the people, amongst whom he laboured for six years.

In 1870 a Lay Conference on the proposed Sustentation Fund was held in Linenhall Street Church, and Messrs. A. J. Macrory and James Nesbitt were appointed delegates to represent the congregation, Mr. J. H. Haslett to act if Mr. Macrory was unable to attend. The committee at the same time took steps to be represented at the Quarter Sessions, to oppose the granting of a licence to the Music Hall, which was situated directly opposite the church, for the sale of spirits, and Messrs. Macrory, Haslett, and T. H. Browne were appointed to attend. It is satisfactory to note that they were successful in their opposition, and the licence was refused.

About this time Rev. John Hall, D.D., lectured in the church on behalf of the Sabbath-school Union; and Rev. Wm. Graham, D.D., missionary to the Jews,

delivered three lectures on behalf of the Destitute Sick Society.

At the annual meeting held in 1871, Mr. V. A. Williams, who had been for some time acting as superintendent of the Sabbath-school, was added to the committee. In the same year a deputation from the House Committee of the General Assembly waited on the committee to inquire if they would agree to such alterations in the building as would make it more suitable for the meetings of Assembly, but as no plans were submitted, the committee did not express any opinion on the matter.

On 29th October, 1871, collections were taken in the church in aid of the funds for the relief of the sufferers by the fire in Chicago.

At the annual meeting in 1872 a presentation was made to Mr. John Boyd of three volumes—Ruskin's "Stones of Venice"—as a testimonial for his designing and superintending the memorial to the late Dr. Cooke. This memorial was erected in the vestibule of the church at a cost of £380, exclusive of the medallion over the central door, which was the gift of the ladies, and executed by Foley. Mr. Boyd, at the meeting referred to, made a report regarding proposed alterations to the ceiling of the church, altering pews, new heating apparatus, painting, and other matters, which he estimated would cost between £700 and £800. The consideration of these matters was adjourned until a further meeting, and when Rev. J. S. MacIntosh, who presided, announced that he had already received promises of subscriptions amounting to £400, it was unanimously agreed to proceed with the work. The proposed alterations were of such an extensive nature that it was necessary to close the church for public worship for some months. On the 12th May, 1872, the congregation met for worship in the Ulster Hall, but as it was not considered satisfactory, owing to defective acoustics, it was decided to accept the

invitation of the Rosemary Street congregation to worship in their church for the months of June, July, and August.

A discussion at this time on a proposal to re-name the church aroused considerable feeling. Some of the friends of Dr. Cooke wished it to be called "The Cooke Church," and in fact got a resolution to this effect carried in a meeting without due notice. The wording on the tablet in front of the church was a compromise, but it did not give entire satisfaction to either party, and the church continues to be known as May Street Church. On 21st June tenders were accepted from Mr. Thomas McKeown for new ceiling, £435; for lowering pews 6 inches, £125; asphalting cellar, £47 10*s.*; centre door, £75, making a total of £662 10*s.*; and, in addition, a tender from Mr. John Lynn for painting, amounting to £219 10*s.*, was accepted. It was further decided to re-slate the church, at a cost of £45. Asphalting of the cellar was omitted from the completed work; but the alterations took longer than at first contemplated, and at the end of August the session and committee of Rosemary Street Church kindly invited the congregation to continue to worship in their church until the alterations in May Street were completed. Whilst the work was being carried out, a memorial was presented to the committee, asking them to have a new pulpit placed in the church, and this proposal gave rise to great difference of opinion, a section of the committee being strongly opposed to the removal of Dr. Cooke's pulpit. It was agreed to refer the matter to a congregational meeting, at which, after lengthened discussion, it was decided by a majority of one "to appoint a sub-committee to confer with Mr. J. Boyd, architect, as to the possibility of enlarging the present pulpit to secure increased accommodation, whilst retaining the present character and identity of Dr. Cooke's pulpit, and to report to congregational meeting this night

week." At this further meeting two plans were submitted; one, which was approved by the committee, showed the pulpit enlarged by turning the two side panels to the front, removing the two winding stairways by which the pulpit was formerly entered, and substituting two steep stairways approached from the back of the pulpit, and surrounding the pulpit with a platform. This was an improvement, as far as the floor-space of the pulpit was concerned, but the steep stairways were very awkward, and for many years the platform was not used to any extent. In later times this platform was twice enlarged, and made available for the accommodation of the choir. When the General Assembly met in the church a large temporary platform was erected on the level of the pulpit floor, over and extending beyond the permanent platform. The timber for this temporary platform when not in use was stored in the basement, and Mr. John McDowell, who was then precentor and had some knowledge of the building trade, had the contract for erecting and dismantling it when required by the Assembly.

It was not until 22nd December that the church was ready for re-opening after the alterations, and Rev. Dr. Donald Fraser, of London, preached on the occasion, and delivered a lecture on the following evening.

In July of the next year May Street Church was placed at the disposal of Rosemary Street congregation whilst the latter church was undergoing repairs.

At the annual meeting in 1874 Rev. J. S. MacIntosh directed the attention of the congregation to the Glebe Loan (Ireland) Acts. He said that frequently the Church, Manse, and School Fund Committee of the Assembly, and also the Presbytery of Belfast, had directed him to bring forward the provisions of these Acts, with a view to inducing the congregation to avail itself of them, but that in consequence of the many claims and demands made on the members, he

had not felt at liberty to press the matter. Now he felt it his duty to direct the minds of the meeting to it, because next year the Acts expire, and there remained but some ten or eleven months for action. The principle of these Acts was explained by him. The Government agree to lend £2 for every £1 expended by a congregation in the purchase or erection of a manse. The Government loan is secured by the property and trustees, and is repaid in thirty-five years by the payment to Her Majesty of an annual sum of £5 for every £100 of such loan. The rent charge may be increased so as to repay the sum advanced sooner than thirty-five years. The suggestion was approved, and a sub-committee was appointed to take charge of the matter. A plot of ground was secured on the south side of Windsor Avenue, at a rent of £18 per annum. Messrs. Thos. H. Browne, Jas. H. Haslett, and Thomas McCann were appointed trustees, and a contract was entered into with Messrs. J. & J. Guiler for the building, according to the plans of Mr. Boyd, at a cost of £1,733. Mr. MacIntosh undertook to apply for Government loan of £1,200, and to be responsible for the annual charge of £60 in repayment of same, as well as the municipal taxes. He was the only minister of the congregation who resided in the manse, as it was let immediately after his resignation for £120 per annum, the congregation paying the annual charge for repayment of loan, in addition to the ground rent, and allowing the incoming minister £60 towards house rent. In 1905 the tenant vacated the manse, and, as it was then in need of very extensive repairs, the congregation decided to sell the property, and a sum of £1,100 was realised after paying balance of loan. This amount was invested, and the income therefrom paid to the minister. This money was afterwards used in part payment of the present manse at Annadale, which was purchased in 1917 at a cost of £1,800.

On Tuesday, 6th March, 1877, the congregation was visited by the Presbytery of Belfast; and later a deputation from the Presbytery waited on the committee, urging an increase in the amount of mission collections, and an endeavour to get all the members of the church to subscribe to the Sustentation Fund. The deputation also asked that the entire seat rents be paid to the minister. It was explained to the deputation that the seat rents were fixed at a figure so as to include an amount towards current expenses, and reference was made to what the congregation had been doing since the decease of Dr. Cooke. The explanation was accepted by the deputation as entirely satisfactory.

At the annual meeting on 14th March, 1879, Mr. James Nesbitt, who had been connected with the congregation for upwards of thirty years, was made the recipient of an address and presentation, which took the form of a portrait by Mr. R. Hooke and a handsome dining-room clock. Mr. John Browne, who was Mayor of Belfast at the time, presided, and complimentary speeches were also made by Rev. J. S. MacIntosh, Mr. Thos. McCann, Mr. John Moffett, and Mr. Samuel Johnston. It was a well deserved compliment to one who had rendered devoted services to the church.

In August of the same year Rev. J. S. MacIntosh received an invitation from the congregation of St. Peter's, Glasgow, asking him to become their minister. He at once consulted the session and committee, and several meetings were held to discuss the matter. Mr. MacIntosh's health was threatened through over-work, but on receiving a promise of greater assistance in the work of the congregation from the members, so that he might give himself chiefly to what he considered his paramount duties, the preaching of the Word and the visitation of the sick and dying, he wrote to Glasgow declining the call. It was resolved

to invite a number of young men to co-operate with the committee in looking after the affairs of the congregation. Agreeably to this resolution the following, amongst others, were present at the next meeting of committee: J. C. Hunter, Andrew Moore, John Stevenson, John Woods, Thomas Townsley, W. R. Stephenson, James Officer, and Jas. L. Hamilton. These gentlemen henceforth were very active workers in the congregation. Several sub-committees were formed. Wm. Macaulay was appointed superintendent of the Sabbath-school, and J. C. Hunter secretary, assisted by the following committee: John Woods, Joseph Dempster, Wm. McDowell, Martin Shaw, James Maxwell, James Officer, and M. McKeown. Mr. John McKeown was also a teacher in the school, and he and Mr. Dempster afterwards became ministers of the church. James Maxwell was a brother of Wm. Maxwell, secretary to the Belfast Town Mission, and for some years, until his lamented death, he taught a young men's Bible class.

At the annual meeting in 1880 Andrew Moore, John Woods, Thomas Townsley, J. C. Hunter, Jackson McGown, R. W. Jones, James Flinn, and Wm. M. Wilson were elected on the committee of the congregation for the first time. At this meeting the following resolution was adopted: "That the best thanks of this meeting be given to the ladies for the valuable services rendered by them in connection with the affairs of the church." Alderman Haslett returned thanks on the part of the ladies in very complimentary terms.

In the autumn of this year Mr. and Mrs. MacIntosh visited America, and a social meeting of the congregation was held in the Assembly Hall, May Street, to welcome them on their safe return. Shortly afterwards Mr. MacIntosh received two calls: one from Second Congregation, Chicago, guaranteeing to pay him 8,000 dollars; and the other from Second Congregation in

Philadelphia, offering 6,000 dollars, and to furnish a house in addition. The committee sought to retain his services by the offer of increased financial support, but ultimately the invitation to Philadelphia was accepted.

On Friday evening, 28th January, 1881, a farewell meeting was held in the church, when there was a very large attendance. Alderman Haslett occupied the chair, and in the course of his address said they met together that night, not in sorrow altogether, but in a kind of chastened sadness, to part with a friend, yet with one who was being removed to a higher and broader sphere of usefulness. Mr. MacIntosh succeeded one of the greatest men their Presbyterian Church had had. It was no light duty to take up work that had been left by Dr. Cooke. Mr. MacIntosh had many difficulties, but these he overcame by indomitable perseverance and eminent Christian faith. At the time he succeeded to the ministry of that church the congregation was, as at present, free of debt. But since then the church had been entirely remodelled, immense improvements had been made in connection with the buildings, rapid strides had been made in the general work of Christian labour. Now, all that had been done through their minister and his excellent wife. Mr. MacIntosh went from them bearing the love and sympathy of no small community—not only of May Street Church, which was one of the largest in Belfast, but bearing the love and sympathy and earnest prayers of their common Presbyterian Church. In conclusion, the chairman read a formal address, and presented Mr. MacIntosh with a silver tray, a silver-mounted salad bowl, a silver breakfast and luncheon dish, and a silver fruit service. After Mr. MacIntosh's reply, Miss Robson and Miss McCann presented Mrs. MacIntosh with a magnificent album, containing photographs of a number of children and grown-up members of the congregation, and two silver

Rev. William Patterson, D.D.

Organ and Enlarged Pulpit

napkin rings. The Rev. Professor Robert Watts, D.D., who had been appointed in charge of the congregation during the vacancy, also addressed the gathering, and at the close the members of the congregation, at Mr. MacIntosh's request, passed round by the pulpit so that he might bid them a personal farewell.

Two years after Mr. MacIntosh's return to the city of his birth, he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Princeton University. He resigned his congregation after fifteen years' pastorate, to take up the convenership of a most important Committee on Church Extension. He accepted a professorship in the Theological College at San Anselmo, Ca., in 1903, and two years later he was appointed Principal. His death took place on 7th January, 1906. He was indeed a man of great intellectual vigour, a wide reader, and an eloquent preacher. His character may be judged from the following inscription, which he wrote in the album of a friend: "At times I have thought that the commands of God might be put in two short but solemn sentences: Believe in Jesus with all thine heart; Live for Jesus with all thy might. The heart full of faith, the hands full of work—and the soul full of peace."

CHAPTER VII

Call to Rev. R. J. Lynd—Centenary of Dr. Cooke's Birth—Rev. R. J. Lynd, Moderator of General Assembly—Degree of Doctor of Divinity—Memorial Windows—Deaths of Mrs. Lynd, Queen Victoria, Mr. Thos. McCann, Mr. Hugh Porter, Sir James H. Haslett, and Rev. R. J. Lynd, D.D.

A SELECTION committee, composed of the members of session, seven members of committee, and seven other members of the congregation, was appointed to select candidates and recommend them to the congregation. The names of no fewer than sixteen ministers were voted on at the first meeting of this committee, but several of these declined to preach for the vacancy, and some requested that no further steps should be taken to bring their names before the congregation. Some names were submitted to the congregation, but for a long time none of them received the necessary two-thirds majority. It was not until 22nd December, after the congregation had been almost a year vacant, that the name of Rev. Robert John Lynd was submitted to the congregation, and the voting was 96 for and 48 against; but immediately the result was declared, several of those who had voted in the minority agreed to join in the call.

Rev. R. J. Lynd was installed as minister on 31st January, 1882. He had been ordained in Whiteabbey. Afterwards he became minister in Academy Street, where he gathered a large congregation, which removed to Berry Street Church after the latter had been left vacant by the removal of Rev. Hugh Hanna's congregation to St. Enoch's Church. In Berry Street Mr. Lynd continued to attract large congregations, and

many of the members migrated with him when he was called to May Street.

During the year in which the congregation was vacant, the pulpit was often occupied by the Rev. Professor Robert Watts, D.D., and his sermons, which were largely of a doctrinal nature, were much appreciated by the members, who made him a suitable presentation after the settlement. In that year the Assembly met in Dublin, and through some oversight or misunderstanding no minister arrived to take the services on Assembly Sabbath. The session was in a serious predicament, but Rev. Alex. Russell, LL.D., a retired minister who was at that time a member of session, was with difficulty persuaded to occupy the pulpit. There was no regular sermon at the morning service, but in the evening the worthy doctor gave an eloquent discourse.

In 1882 Mr. James L. Hamilton was appointed joint secretary with Mr. James Nesbitt, and the latter died during the year, when Mr. Wm. M. Wilson was appointed joint secretary with Mr. Hamilton. Then, in 1884, Mr. John C. Hunter was appointed in conjunction with Mr. Wilson, and these two continued in office until 1890, Mr. Hunter doing the clerical work with great accuracy and marked ability.

The committee in 1882 appointed Wm. Marshall and David Cooke, two very close friends, to assist in taking the collection on the gallery, and in the following year they were both elected on the committee, and became actively engaged in the work of the congregation. Wm. Marshall was most energetic in every work to which he put his hand, and he was a very generous contributor to the funds of the church. He took a leading part in the erection of the Mission Hall in Cromac Square, and he taught in Alfred Sabbath-school under the superintendence of Sir Jas. H. Haslett. He was ordained an elder in the congregation in 1892, and some years later he went to reside

in Bangor, and there he helped to free Hamilton Road Church from the incubus of debt. For some years prior to his death, which took place on 20th April, 1929, he was an invalid, but he continued to take a deep interest in all religious work. No one was a greater favourite or better known in the congregation than David Cooke. As convener of the Committee for Reception of Strangers he was seldom absent from the vestibule, and he had a warm hand-shake for all. He was several times invited to act on the session, but he invariably declined. He acted as secretary to the committee for a period of six years, and his death in 1921 was a great loss to the congregation.

When Rev. R. J. Lynd was settled in the congregation he rented a house in Windsor Avenue, the manse having been let for a term of five years, which was renewed in 1885 for a like period, with the minister's approval. In this year the congregations of Rosemary Street and May Street worshipped together during the months of July and August, meeting for one month in each church. This arrangement continued until the close of Dr. Lynd's ministry, and on many occasions the congregation was indebted to the good offices of Rev. Wm. Park, who was in the habit of describing himself as the curate of May Street. He readily responded to every request from May Street congregation, and he persistently refused to accept any fee for services rendered.

CENTENARY OF DR. COOKE'S BIRTH

The attention of the Presbytery of Belfast having been drawn to the fact that the 11th May, 1888, would be the centenary of the birth of Dr. Cooke, it was decided to appoint a committee to arrange for its due celebration. A religious service was held in the church at 12 o'clock on that day, when Rev. Wm.

Johnston, D.D., presided over a large congregation. Rev. Professor Thos. Witherow, D.D., LL.D., gave an address on the life, work, and character of Dr. Cooke. Rev. Robt. Crawford, who acted as secretary, in apologising for the absence of Rev. President J. L. Porter, D.D., LL.D., a son-in-law of Dr. Cooke, who had been ordered abroad for rest and change, intimated that it was the original intention of the Centenary Committee to lay the foundation of a new church at Ormeau, which was to be called the Cooke Centenary Church, but that matters were not sufficiently matured to enable that to be done. Rev. W. Gordon, another son-in-law of Dr. Cooke, and Rev. Professor R. Watts, D.D., also addressed the meeting.

At half-past two o'clock a large number of guests sat down to luncheon in the Assembly Hall, May Street. Rev. R. J. Lynd presided, and the company included many ministers and elders, together with the magistrates and leading citizens. A great popular demonstration was held in the Ulster Hall at half-past seven on the same evening. Sir James H. Haslett, Mayor of Belfast, occupied the chair, and the other speakers were Rev. John H. Orr, D.D., Moderator of the General Assembly; the Venerable Charles Seaver, D.D., Archdeacon of Connor; Rev. R. J. Lynd; Rev. Hugh Hanna, D.D.; and Rev. John Donald, D.D., a representative of the Methodist Church. During the evening a Centenary Ode, composed for the occasion by Mr. T. Smith and set to music by Mr. J. H. Greenhill, Mus.B., T.C.D., was sung by a specially trained choir under the direction of Mr. Greenhill. Mr. J. S. Firth presided at the organ, and solos were sung by Mr. Louis Mantell. The musical performance was listened to with great satisfaction, and was followed by loud and repeated applause. Not only in Belfast, but in Dublin and in many other towns in Ulster and elsewhere, was the Centenary observed.

Rev. R. J. Lynd was elected Moderator of the General Assembly in 1888. In the autumn of that year Belfast was visited by Major Whittle, a noted American evangelist, who conducted several weeks' mission in various churches in different districts of the city. The closing meetings were held in May Street Church, and at the final meeting Rev. R. J. Lynd gave a very impressive address to young converts on the text, "As ye have therefore received the Lord Jesus, so walk ye in Him."

On 6th September, 1889, the Presbytery of Belfast was granted the use of the school-room for their monthly meetings, and until the Church House was built it was regarded as the regular place of meeting.

On the 2nd February, 1890, the Rev. Marshall Lang, D.D., of Glasgow, the father of the present Archbishop of Canterbury, preached at the morning and evening services to large congregations, and he also delivered a lecture on the following evening to a delighted audience.

A few months later the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on Rev. R. J. Lynd, to the intense satisfaction of the members of the congregation and his many other friends. Some time previously the ladies of the congregation had asked and received the permission of the committee to put in new side windows in the church, and in the summer of 1890 they were able to carry out their designs, and the cost was defrayed by money raised through their efforts. They also provided umbrella-stands, and undertook the cost of painting the school-room. At the same time two memorial windows were installed in the gable of the church—one portraying John Calvin, which was the gift of Wm. McMeekin, Esq., J.P.; and the other being a memorial to Dr. Cooke, on which is the following inscription: "In memoriam. Henry Cooke, D.D., LL.D. Born 1788, died 1868"; and on a panel at the bottom is the following quotation

from one of his speeches: "So long as we rest upon the foundation, Christ Jesus the Lord, God manifest in the flesh, we shall remain throughout the changes and injuries of time a temple unprofaned by the foot of the enemy—a building of God amongst the ruins of the universe."—*Speech before the Synod of Ulster, Coleraine, 28th June*, 1825.

The congregation was again visited by the Presbytery of Belfast on 3rd May, 1892, and a favourable Finding was recorded. In December of the same year Rev. Professor Rentoul, D.D., of Melbourne, who was a cousin of Dr. Lynd, preached in the church and also delivered a lecture on Tennyson to large audiences. A considerable sum of money was raised for church funds on the occasion. Rev. Professor Rentoul again visited this country in 1906, and preached on the 16th September in the church, and gave a lecture, entitled "Australia and her Hope," on the following Tuesday evening. A sum of over £62 was raised by this effort.

In November, 1893, a presentation was made to Rev. R. J. Lynd, D.D., and Mrs. Lynd. In a letter to Mr. McCann, Dr. Lynd asked him to convey to the subscribers "our deep sense of the thoughtful kindness which assumed such a substantial form—while it surprised us, it cheered and gladdened us to know that we have friends so attached and so true; and while we feel humbled in God's sight by a sense of our own unworthiness, we do not cease to bless Him that He has encircled our earthly lot by friends of such liberal and loving hearts."

The following year the congregation, through a special effort, cleared off a debt of £450.

One of the most successful organisations in the congregation was inaugurated in 1896, mainly through the efforts of Mrs. Lynd, when the Church Guild held its first session. Mr. J. C. Hunter was secretary, and on the programme of that session was a paper by

Dr. S. E. A. Acheson on the history of May Street Church. In November of that year the Assembly's Guild was granted the use of the church for a lecture by Rev. W. J. McCaughan, the subject being "The Siege of Derry."

Mrs. Lynd died on 1st January, 1898, and in appreciation of her efforts on behalf of the Guild, the ladies of the congregation continued to take a deep interest in this sphere of activity, so that its meetings were amongst the most popular gatherings in connection with the church. Mrs. Lynd's death was a great loss to the congregation, as she had been an ideal leader in the many efforts in which the women had been engaged for the benefit of the church.

In 1900 a Twentieth Century Fund was established, with the object of raising £100,000 for church schemes in connection with the General Assembly, and Mr. W. M. Wilson was appointed treasurer for our congregation, and many large contributions were received. The general effort was very successful, and portion of the fund was allocated to sharing the cost of the Assembly Hall and Church House. In November of that year special services were conducted by Rev. Dr. Black, of Inverness, and a sum of £126 10*s*. was received at the collections.

Queen Victoria died in January, 1901, and a memorial service was held in the church at the same hour at which the funeral service was held in Westminster Abbey. The building was crowded on the occasion.

In the summer of that year the church and schoolroom were painted—part of the cost being met by subscriptions, and the balance of the expenditure being cleared off by the Women's Guild. Shortly afterwards a new heating apparatus was installed in the church, and by a special effort a sum of £273 was raised.

Mr. Thomas McCann died in December, 1902. He had given a lifetime of faithful and zealous service in

the interest of the Church, and in his time no one was more respected or had greater influence in the congregation. The following is recorded in the minutes:—

"The session and committee of May Street Church desire to put on record their deep sense of the loss which they, in common with all the members of the congregation, have suffered in the lamented death of Mr. Thomas McCann. Since July, 1848, our venerated friend has been identified with every interest and every department of the Lord's work in May Street. On 5th February, 1855, he was elected a member of the congregational committee, an office which he held up till his death. His attendance was exemplary. Fair weather or foul he was punctually in his place, discharging his official duties with zeal and ability. In 1864 he was unanimously elected to the responsible position of treasurer, and it was largely due to his unwearied exertions that the funds of the church have been maintained in such a prosperous condition. In March, 1871, Mr. McCann was ordained to the eldership, and by his assiduous discharge of its duties won the esteem and affection of all his fellow-members. In time of sickness or sorrow his visits and sympathy touched all hearts. He was frequently chosen as representative elder to the General Assembly, and was never absent from its proceedings when it met in Belfast. Delegates from the Mission field always found a cordial welcome in his home, his interest in mission work being deepened by his family relationship to the Rev. John G. Phillips, B.A., who has so long and faithfully laboured as missionary to the Jews in Damascus.

"Mr. McCann was a true and loyal friend to all the ministers of May Street. Dr. Cooke, Dr. MacIntosh, and Dr. Lynd, respectively, received ungrudging help and sympathy in every department of church work, and there was not even a momentary divergence of feeling to mar their intercourse. Nor were our departed

friend's labours confined exclusively to his own congregation. He had a warm interest in everything connected with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. He was a prominent member of several important committees of the Church, where his counsel and co-operation were highly valued. In business life his integrity was never questioned. His relation to his employés was more like that of a friend than an employer, and they reciprocated his kindness with unstinted gratitude. For years he was a member of the Town Council, but a growing business so absorbed his time that he felt constrained to abandon municipal affairs. Mr. McCann's Christian character was undoubted. His religion was of the life, not of the lip merely. In integrity, fidelity to duty, and love to his Saviour and Church, he has left us a model worthy of our remembrance and imitation. His love for May Street Church was warmly reciprocated by the congregation. On 14th March, 1888, at a congregational meeting, he was presented with a warm address and a valuable gift in token of the universal appreciation of his character and services, and the enthusiasm of the whole proceedings was a magnificent testimony to the place he held in the hearts of the people.

"He was a devoted husband and a loving father; a loyal friend. Our hearts and prayers go upward on behalf of those who will never forget him, and whose unfailing love cheered his life. We prayerfully commend the bereaved widow and family to the God who comforts the widow and who is the Father of the fatherless, and assure them of our confidence that Mr. McCann's memory will be identified with May Street so long as it is a church, and be an inspiration to many to follow in his steps."

Shortly afterwards the death of Mr. Hugh Porter took place. He was a man of quiet, unassuming character, and a great friend of Dr. Lynd. He was

unmarried, and lived with a sister. Another sister was married to Rev. Wm. Johnston, D.D., and was closely associated with him in the formation and activities of the Presbyterian Orphan Society.

A revival of religion took place in Wales about this time, and excited great interest throughout the Christian world. Mr. John Beattie, the city missionary in connection with the congregation, visited the scene of the revival, and on his return spoke enthusiastically of what he had seen and heard.

Sir James H. Haslett died in 1905, and the sense of loss was not confined to May Street, but was realised throughout the city and far beyond. There is a statue erected to his memory in the grounds of the City Hall, the cost being defrayed by public subscription.

During the latter years of Dr. Lynd's ministry—mainly through deaths and several members going to reside in the suburbs—the congregation was not quite so large as formerly; but although the finances were somewhat restricted, it was able to remain free from debt. In 1906 the session and committee, anxious to relieve Dr. Lynd of some of the heavy duties of the pastorate, urged upon him the advisability of appointing a licentiate assistant, and undertook to pay the salary of same, a special fund being raised for the purpose. Accordingly, the Rev. Gilmour Neill was appointed, and continued to act until the death of Dr. Lynd, which took place on 17th November of the same year, after a short illness. The Presbytery adopted the following minute at a meeting held on the 4th December:—

"The members of Presbytery have heard with profound sorrow of the death, after a brief illness, of their beloved brother and friend, the Rev. R. J. Lynd, D.D., of May Street Church, and they are anxious to put on record their sense of heavy public and personal loss, and also the grateful and affectionate

remembrance which they will always cherish of the character and services of one who spent his entire ministry in their midst. Dr. Lynd was a man of rich and varied natural endowments, which he early devoted to the service of God in the sanctuary. His force of mind and clear judgment were joined to a sympathy for the highest good of men that never failed; and, developed by constant reading and study, these qualities, guided by a rare good taste and discrimination, gained for him a foremost place as one of the most attractive and powerful preachers in our own or any denomination. For nearly a quarter of a century he filled one of the historic pulpits of this city; and with what splendid success its great tradition has been sustained is known to all. All his life his services have been constantly sought after throughout the country, and he answered these appeals with a generous readiness that knew no stint. In the community, as well as in the Church, he came to be indispensable, and his name will be long and honourably associated with some of the greatest public movements of his time. But it is not only the great preacher and fearless champion that we mourn to-day. Dr. Lynd was one of the gentlest of men, patient and forbearing, always accessible, always brotherly—a true son of consolation in times of sorrow and difficulty. A great and gentle presence that always added distinction has been withdrawn from amongst us. For some of us a long-existing and ever-strengthening bond has been broken, and we sorrow most of all to-day that in churches and presbyteries and meetings, private and public, we shall see his face no more. To the members of the bereaved family we offer our sincere sympathy, and to the congregation that is separated from the pastor and friend of so many years. We unite with them in their grief, and we unite with them also in that thanksgiving which will ultimately overcome all grief—thanksgiving to God for what He

enabled His servant to be and to do; and while his death is a warning that, to us all, as to him, the night cometh when no man can work, our prayer is that his life and labours may be enshrined in our hearts as a sacred incentive to work, as he did, while it is day."

The following minute was adopted by the General Assembly on 12th June, 1907: "The Rev. R. J. Lynd, B.A., D.D., was ordained at Whiteabbey, and finished his course as minister of May Street Church. Few men have a character built up of so many pre-eminent qualities. Nature gave him a face so delicately spiritual in every feature, and a voice so melodious in its every tone, that it was evident from his boyhood that he was intended for a great future. He was a student and an elocutionist, a thinker and a theologian, from the very beginning of his ministry. But God has many ways of qualifying His servants for their mission. To a University training and great natural gifts there was added the tempering touch of a fiery trial, which gave sharpness and quality to the blade that was to be used in many a field of conflict. He read the best books and took the sanest view on all questions. He was deeply interested in politics without being a politician. He had the statesman's wide horizon without the perplexities of party that darken counsel. As Moderator of the General Assembly, and on public platforms, we had speeches from him on great issues, delivered with rare power. But he was pre-eminently a preacher. His beautiful diction was often kindled with the fire and driven home with the moral energy of a Hebrew prophet. His deeply devotional nature and cultivated taste made every part of the service as delightful as it was profitable. He was 'the brother beloved' of this Church, the most gentle and kindly of men. We leave him with his Lord, whose cross and passion was his one theme as a preacher and his only hope of glory. 'When shall we look on his like again?'"

Dr. Lynd left a family of two sons and five daughters. The elder son, Robert, has achieved some eminence in the literary world, being a well-known critic and writer. He is at present on the editorial staff of the *Daily News*. The younger son, John Laurence, has a position in the Law Courts, Dublin. His eldest daughter is the wife of R. M. Jones, M.A., LL.D., sometime Head-master of the Royal Academical Institution, Belfast; the second daughter is married to Mr. Alexander Foster, M.A., Head-master of the Belfast Royal Academy; a third is the wife of W. Lowry, K.C.

CHAPTER VIII

Proposed Union with Rosemary Street—Call to Rev. W. J. McCaughan —Memorial to Dr. Lynd—Lectures by Mr. McCaughan—Three Years' Ministry—Deaths of Mr. and Mrs. McCaughan—The McCaughan Memorial.

A FEW months prior to Dr. Lynd's death it was reported that there were 331 communicants on the roll; and when a poll list was made out there were 161 voters in the congregation. On 28th December the session agreed to accept the services of Mr. Arthur Parke, licentiate, who ministered to the congregation with much acceptance for a period of about four months, prior to his call to Ballykelly. A few years later Mr. Parke met his death through a motor-cycle accident. Mr. Henry Cooke Waddell succeeded him as licentiate in May Street, and was highly esteemed for his work. The congregation presented him with a roll-top desk on the conclusion of his term of service.

After Dr. Lynd's death there was a proposal made that the congregation should be united with Rosemary Street, with Rev. Wm. Park as minister. The proposal found general acceptance; but when the question arose as to which building should be used for worship, it was pointed out that two-thirds of those who would form the united congregation lived nearer May Street than Rosemary Street. The members of the latter congregation were unwilling that their church should be closed, and the proposal fell through after a most friendly discussion.

Many of the members of May Street were then

anxious that Rev. Gilmour Neill should succeed Dr. Lynd, but he received a call to Hillhall, and the minds of the congregation were directed to Rev. W. J. McCaughan, formerly of Wellington Street, Ballymena, and Mountpottinger, who eleven years previously had accepted a call to St. Andrew's, Toronto, and afterwards transferred to Third Presbyterian Church, Chicago. Mr. McCaughan, during his absence, had kept in close touch with many of his friends in this country, who urged the May Street people to extend an invitation to him, with the result that a unanimous call was forwarded promising a stipend of £600. The seat rents of May Street at that time amounted to only £325; and as Mr. McCaughan had a large salary in Chicago, it was decided to open a guarantee fund, which soon amounted to the required sum. When the position was explained to Mr. McCaughan he declined to accept any guarantee, and stated that if he accepted the call he would do so on its merits. There was considerable delay before a decision was arrived at; however, during the meeting of the General Assembly, in June, 1907, a cable was received conveying the welcome intelligence that he accepted the call. He and Mrs. McCaughan took a short holiday on the continent, and arrived in Belfast in September, when he received a most enthusiastic welcome. He was installed on 24th September, the Rev. W. J. Currie, now of Bangor, preaching on the occasion. On the following evening a reception was held in the Assembly Hall, which was decorated for the occasion. Mr. Jas. Johnston, J.P., occupied the chair, and there was a large company present, many friends of Mr. McCaughan coming long distances to join with the May Street people in welcoming him back to Ireland. On the following Lord's Day he preached his first sermon as minister of the church. Tickets of admission were issued to seat-holders, who had to be in their places a considerable time before the hour of service. The

Rev. Alexander Wylie Blue

Mrs. Blue

title of the sermon was "The Endless Ideal," and the text, Hebrews xiii., verses 7 and 8: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation; Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." In opening, he made fitting reference to those who had preceded him in the ministry of the church.

He was not long settled in May Street before he suggested that Dr. Lynd's ministry of twenty-five years should be commemorated in a fitting manner, and he set himself, with characteristic energy, to carry out the project. It was decided that the memorial should take the form of a bust, and Mr. A. M. Shannan, A.R.S.A., who had married a daughter of Mr. Thos. McCann, was commissioned to execute the work, which now adorns the vestibule. The unveiling ceremony took place on Tuesday morning, 7th June, 1910, at the conclusion of the communion service held in the church in connection with the meeting of the General Assembly. Rev. John H. Murphy, D.D., the Moderator, presided, and was accompanied by the ex-Moderator, Rev. J. C. Clarke, D.D. After a few words from the Moderator, Rev. Wm. Park delivered an appreciative address, and Mr. Melville McGown, secretary of the Memorial Committee, formally handed over to Mr. John Woods, as representing the trustees of the church, the memorial bust of their dear friend and pastor. The Moderator, ex-Moderator, Rev. Wm. Park, Rev. W. J. McCaughan, the members of Dr. Lynd's family, the session, the memorial committee, and the committee of the church, followed by the congregation, then proceeded to the vestibule, where Mrs. R. M. Jones (a daughter of Dr. Lynd) unveiled the memorial, and those present reverently filed past and greatly admired the work.

Mr. McCaughan had three strenuous years in May Street. For the first year he devoted himself exclu-

sively to congregational work, and for that period he was not absent from his own pulpit, although within a short time after his arrival he had over one hundred applications to conduct services. During the remainder of his ministry, on occasions he invited noted ministers to May Street pulpit, and at such times he took the opportunity to assist his brethren in different parts of the country by taking services for them. One of the ministers whom he thus invited was Rev. Frank W. Gunsaulus, D.D., of Chicago, whose sermons made a deep impression on the congregation. His morning discourse was founded on the incident preceding the Last Supper, when the Lord took a towel and girded himself and washed the disciples' feet.

Mr. McCaughan was a born organiser, and very thorough and methodical in every work which he undertook. He established and organised a Bible Class; he began the publication of "The Greeting," of which Mr. Wm. Moorehead was the first editor; and he gathered round him a group of workers who were ever ready to do his bidding. As a preacher he had few equals, and he was unsurpassed as a lecturer. Each year of his ministry he delivered a lecture in the Assembly Hall to crowded audiences. The first was entitled "The Garden City," and the receipts amounted to £80 4*s.* 6*d.*; the second, on "Abraham Lincoln," realised £63 9*s.*; and the third (after his visit to Geneva to attend the fourth centenary of the birth of Calvin), on "John Calvin," produced the sum of £70 3*s.* 6*d.*

In 1908 the death of Mr. Thomas Henry Browne was recorded. He had devoted himself unstintingly to the interests of the mission district—first in Welsh Street and afterwards in Cromac Square. He was a member of session, and he had acted for a time as session clerk. His widow, out of respect to his memory, bore the expense of painting Cromac Square Mission Hall.

In October, 1909, anniversary services were held, and special collections were taken amounting to £76 0*s.* 3*d.*, which, on Mr. McCaughan's suggestion, was made the beginning of a fund for purchase of the ground rent of the church. After Mr. McCaughan's death this fund was named "The McCaughan Memorial Fund," and there is now an income from it which more than covers the ground rent.

During Mr. McCaughan's ministry he introduced Christmas Day services, when special music was rendered by the choir, and collections taken on behalf of the Choir Fund. He also conducted Watch-night services, at which collections were taken for the Royal Victoria Hospital. These services, introduced by him, have been continued ever since.

When Mr. McCaughan returned to Belfast he rented a house in Crescent Gardens, but after two years he decided to take up his residence in a private hotel. He therefore sold off his furniture and removed to a suite of rooms in the Kelvin Hotel, College Square East, so named because the house had been the birthplace of Lord Kelvin. This step was undertaken mainly in order to relieve Mrs. McCaughan of household duties, as they were in the habit of entertaining largely, and they had more facilities for this purpose in the hotel than in a private house. In the spring of 1910 they had planned to visit America in the months of August and September, and Mr. McCaughan had arranged for the supply of the pulpit during his absence.

On 24th July he preached in the morning from the text, Heb. iv. 3: "For we which have believed do enter into rest"; and in the evening from Isaiah xlviii. 18: "Thy peace like a river."

The following day was cold and stormy, and in the evening a good fire was kept blazing in the hotel lounge. When the residents retired for the night this fire was left burning. In the early morning the

lounge was discovered to be on fire, and as the stairs —the only exit from the rooms above—led directly into the lounge, they were soon ablaze, and the residents were trapped on the upper floor. Some of them escaped by windows, and others by climbing on to the roof. Mr. and Mrs. McCaughan's room was directly over the scene of the outbreak, and being unable to escape by the stairs, they entered the room in front and got on to the window-sill. The fire, however, entered this room, and they were forced to jump, or fall, just as the brigade came on the scene. They were both conveyed to the Royal Victoria Hospital, where it was found that Mr. McCaughan, in addition to extensive burns, had a fractured skull. Mrs. McCaughan did not seem to be so seriously injured, and was quite conscious. News of the accident was at once cabled to their relatives in Philadelphia, and Mrs. McCaughan's sister and cousin booked passages in the first available steamer. There was some hope that Mr. McCaughan's life might be spared, and a very solemn meeting for prayer was held in the church on Wednesday evening. However, on Saturday, 30th July, pneumonia developed, and he passed away at nine o'clock in the evening without having regained consciousness. Telegrams were dispatched to several friends, both in America and in this country, including Rev. Wm. Park, who had agreed to conduct the services in May Street on the following day, and arrangements were made to have the church draped for the occasion. The news of his death spread over the city, and the church was filled with a sorrowing congregation. His remains were removed to the church the next day, and a funeral service was held on Tuesday, 2nd August. Rev. J. H. Murphy, D.D., of Cork, the Moderator of the General Assembly, presided. After the service the procession was formed, and the streets were lined with dense crowds throughout the entire route to the City

Cemetery. Seldom has an event created so much sorrow, or drawn forth such an expression of sympathy from the populace. Mrs. McCaughan's friends arrived a few days after the funeral, and there was general expectation that she would be restored to health, but on the morning of 11th August she suddenly expired, her death being due to a clot.

It was decided to perpetuate their memory by founding a fund with the object of purchasing or providing for the ground rent, after defraying the cost of a bust of Mr. McCaughan, to be erected in the vestibule of the church. Several large subscriptions were received, and some bequests, and it was not long until a sufficient amount was available for the purpose. The bust, which is the work of Mr. A. M. Shannan, A.R.S.A., was unveiled on 5th January, 1913. The Moderator, Rev. Henry Montgomery, D.D., presided, and the Rev. Wm. McKean, D.D., preached on the occasion. Rev. Wm. Park, D.D., also took part in the proceedings.

The following minute was adopted by the Presbytery of Belfast: "At this, the first stated meeting after the terrible fire in our city on July 26th, by which, under the most tragic circumstances, our brother the Rev. W. J. McCaughan and Mrs. McCaughan, with four others, lost their lives, we desire to place on record our deep sorrow at this sad event, and our sense of heavy loss. No event of recent years has more profoundly stirred our whole city, or evoked a deeper sympathy from all classes and creeds, than the death of Mr. McCaughan. The universal grief, which found expression in many ways during the few and anxious days he lingered in unconsciousness, testified how much he was honoured and beloved, not by his own congregation only, but by the entire community. During the twelve years he laboured in Mountpottinger he proved himself an able minister of Jesus Christ, preaching the Word of God effectively, and discharging

all his parochial duties with diligence and acceptance; while in the public affairs of our city, and especially in all kinds of charitable and philanthropic work, he took a lively interest. It was with reluctance we agreed to his departure from our midst in 1897, in answer to a call from Canada. We often heard with pleasure of his great and growing popularity and usefulness—first in Toronto and afterwards in Chicago —during the ten years of his absence from Ireland. It is not yet quite three years since he accepted a unanimous call from the congregation of May Street to become its minister. The work he undertook in May Street was one of unusual difficulty, but from the very first he threw himself into it with the intense and single-hearted zeal which was characteristic of him; and the overflowing church and the congregation, prosperous in every department of its activity, prove the singular power of his all too brief ministry. He was richly endowed: a man of magnetic personality; of remarkable gifts for organisation and administration; of broad and tolerant views, touching life at more points than most men; and of simple, fervent, and sincere spirit. All his gifts were consecrated whole-heartedly to the service of his Master. In May Street pulpit he stood in a succession of notable preachers and expositors, whose best traditions he nobly maintained and enhanced, proclaiming the doctrine of Christ crucified with an eloquence and force that Sabbath after Sabbath attracted immense congregations. As a member of this Presbytery he was always the same—a most friendly and brotherly man, easy to work with, ever ready to do a kindness —a favourite with everyone. He attended the meetings of Presbytery regularly, and took a keen concern in all our proceedings; and, no doubt, had he been spared, he would have occupied a more and more prominent place in our Church and our city as the days went on. But it has been God's will that

his most useful and promising career should be cut off suddenly: we can only bow to His sovereign will, believing that He knows best what is good for His Church and for each of His servants. In his wife Mr. McCaughan had a true and gentle helpmeet, interested in all her husband's many interests, sharing in his labours, and contributing in no small degree by her amiability and tactfulness to the success and popularity of her husband. Of them it may be truly said—they were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided. We tender our sympathy to the congregation of May Street, which is again, and so soon, bereft of its minister. Our earnest prayer is that God will speedily raise up a man after His own heart to take up and carry on the work of Mr. McCaughan, and of the eminent men who preceded him in the pastorate of the congregation."

The General Assembly in 1911 adopted the following minute: "The Rev. William John McCaughan, after serving his Church in Wellington Street and Mountpottinger, spent some years in Toronto and Chicago, from which he returned, in the fulness of a rich experience and in the zenith of his pulpit power, to undertake work in the congregation of May Street. Throughout his career he made ample use of his many natural gifts, and attracted large audiences by his pulpit ministrations. In temperament strenuous and thorough, warm-hearted and chivalrous, he exerted a strong and helpful influence upon widely differing types of men. He had a large measure of administrative capacity, which he willingly devoted to the service of the Church in several of its leading enterprises. In all his spheres of labour he took a prominent part in philanthropic and religious organisations. The tragic circumstances of his death combine with the vigour of his ministry to give him a large place in the affectionate remembrance of the Church."

CHAPTER IX

Arrangements during Vacancy—Call to Rev. Wm. Patterson, D.D. —Construction of Lower Hall—Installation of Organ—Death of Mrs. Park—Death of James Kennedy—Dr. Patterson called to Toronto.

DURING the vacancy in the pastorate occasioned by the death of Rev. W. J. McCaughan, Rev. A. J. Wilson, then clerk of the Belfast Presbytery, was convener of the commission in charge of the congregation and moderator of session. After consultation with the session he arranged that the Sabbath services should be conducted by Rev. Wm. Wylie, who, though a retired minister, succeeded by his vigorous preaching in attracting large congregations. At the same time Rev. Professor Hamill, D.D. agreed to conduct the Bible Class until the close of the college session. Afterwards Mr. Robert Baillie took charge of the class, and both these gentlemen rendered valuable assistance in this connection.

After some months the name of Rev. William Patterson, D.D., formerly of Cooke's Church, Toronto, and of Bethany Church, Philadelphia, was brought before the session and committee. He was at that time doing evangelistic work in the West of Canada. He had had ten years' exceptionally heavy work in connection with Bethany Church, and had resigned owing to a breakdown in health. After inquiries it was learnt that his health had been restored, and that, if he received a unanimous call, he was likely to consider it favourably. On receipt of this information the committee recommended his name to the congregation, and a unanimous call was sent to him,

which he accepted. He arrived in Belfast on 12th April, 1911, accompanied by Mrs. Patterson and three of their daughters. They were entertained to breakfast in the Church Hall, a company of fifty ladies and gentlemen being present. Mr. John Williamson presided, and welcomed them in the name of the session, committee, and members of May Street congregation. He said Dr. Patterson had a great record, and he believed that he would be a worthy successor to all those who had ministered in their church. Rev. Professor Leitch, D.D., President of the Assembly's College, said it gave him great pleasure and satisfaction to join in their welcome. He had known Dr. Patterson for a great many years, and he knew that he was a success in every charge to which he ministered. Rev. Wm. McKean, D.D., Rev. Professor Hamill, D.D., Mr. Francis Curley, J.P. (ex-High Sheriff), Mr. David Mitchell, Mr. R. M. Jones, and Mr. W. J. Price also joined in expressions of welcome. Dr. Patterson in reply said that the first message of welcome had been received by wireless telegraphy when they were on the high seas; then they had been welcomed at Liverpool, and that morning they had been warmly received on their arrival in the city, and now every kindness had been showered upon them. He had never even a thought of undertaking a pastorate in the old country, but the hand of God had been guiding him and them, and what seemed such a short time ago an impossibility had become a reality. He appreciated all that had been said, and hoped that they would not expect too much from him.

Dr. Patterson was born near Maghera, and he decided to spend a few days with his relatives in that part of the country before his installation, which took place on Thursday evening, 20th April, 1911. The Rev. John Milliken, Moderator of Presbytery, presided, Rev. W. N. Maxwell preached, Rev. Samuel

Thompson expounded the principles of Presbyterian Church polity, Rev. A. J. Wilson put the prescribed questions to the minister-elect, Rev. Wm. McKean, D.D., led in the installation prayer, and Rev. Wm. Park addressed the minister and congregation. The following evening a reception was held in the Assembly Hall, when Dr. and Mrs. Patterson received a very warm welcome from a large audience. On the following Sabbath Dr. Patterson preached to large congregations. His text at the morning service was, "Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach"; and his evening subject was "Three New Testament Conversions."

Previous to renting a house in Princess Gardens, Dr. Patterson and family were for a time the guests of Mr. James Johnston, who then resided in Annadale House. Dr. Patterson was a strong evangelical preacher, and he used topical subjects to great advantage. The congregation was well maintained during his short ministry, and very great improvements were made in the buildings. The basement was converted into a hall and suitable rooms, a pipe organ was installed, and electric light was introduced—the total expenditure amounting to about £3,000; and although over £2,000 remained as a debt for some time, the congregation were fortunate in having the work completed just before the abnormal increases in prices occasioned by the war. Had the alterations and improvements been delayed but a short time, the cost would have been trebled.

At the morning service on 3rd December, 1911, the congregation passed a resolution of sympathy with the Rev. Wm. Park, on the occasion of the death of Mrs. Park, which had taken place on the previous day. At the time of Mr. McCaughan's death, in the previous year, the committee of the church had purchased a corner plot of ground in the City Cemetery, and had conveyed the portion in which Mr. and Mrs. McCaughan were buried to their representatives. There was a

considerable portion remaining in the hands of the committee, and as Mr. Park required burying ground, the committee offered to let him have part of the surplus free of any charge. However, Mr. Park insisted on paying for it. Some portion of this ground is still unoccupied, and is in possession of the committee.

On 17th March, 1912, the session clerk announced from the pulpit the death, which had occurred the previous day, of James Kennedy, who for a period of 37 years had been the faithful church officer. Dr. Patterson preached an appropriate memorial sermon, and the committee met immediately afterwards and agreed to defray all funeral expenses. Mr. Kennedy was ever most courteous and attentive, and he was known to almost every member of the General Assembly. During the sitting which preceded his death, and when he was lying ill, the Moderator called upon him personally to convey the sympathy of the members, and he referred to him publicly in his closing address.

Dr. Patterson was but a short time in May Street when he was approached with a view to his returning to his first charge in Cooke's Church, Toronto, where his ministry had been very fruitful. However, it was ultimately decided to ask Rev. John McNeill to accept the pastorate of that congregation. At the end of three years Mr. McNeill resigned, and Dr. Patterson was again approached, and much to the regret of the people of May Street he considered the proposal favourably, and resigned on 31st March, 1915, and returned to Toronto.

CHAPTER X

Call to Rev. A. W. Blue—War Loan—Mr. Blue with the Troops in France—Trustees—War Memorial Tablet Visit of Mr. Blue to U.S.A.

DURING Dr. Patterson's ministry he visited America on two occasions, and the pulpit was frequently supplied by American preachers. One of these was Dr. R. H. Morris, of Philadelphia, who conducted the services on 11th and 18th August, 1912. He made a great impression on the congregation, and when the vacancy occurred many members were desirous of securing him as their minister, with the result that a unanimous call was extended to him, and he intimated his intention to accept. However, his Presbytery refused to release him from his charge, and the matter was not pursued further. When this information was received the vacancy in the pastorate had already lasted six months, and it was three months later before there was any prospect of a settlement. Early in 1916 the name of Rev. A. Wylie Blue, of St. George's Church, Sunderland, was mentioned to the session clerk from three independent sources in the same week, and he immediately brought the name before the selection committee. No official action was taken, but Mr. W. J. Price and he agreed to visit Sunderland to hear Mr. Blue and make inquiries. They were favourably impressed, and after the evening service they made an appointment to wait upon Mr. Blue on the following morning. They explained the position of the church, and inquired if Mr. Blue

would accept an invitation to visit Belfast and conduct services in the Assembly Hall, or in the church, so that the people should have an opportunity of hearing him. He expressed his willingness to preach in the church, and on this being reported to the selection committee, it was arranged that he should be invited to conduct the services on 19th March. He arrived in Belfast on Saturday morning, and was the guest of the Misses Mitchell. Previous to the morning service the members of session and committee crowded into the vestry and were introduced to Mr. Blue, and he won the hearts of all, even before they heard him preach. The church was filled at each service; and there was not a dissentient voice when his name was unanimously recommended by the committee to the congregation. A call was drawn up and largely signed, and a deputation was appointed to support the call before the Presbytery of Durham, which met on Easter week. The rebellion in Dublin broke out on the Monday of that week, and on the Tuesday Mr. W. J. Price and the session clerk crossed to Liverpool, the other members of the deputation being deterred. On disembarking at Liverpool the steamer on which they had crossed was commandeered by the Government in order to convey to Dublin troops and artillery, which were already collected on the quay-side, and all ordinary means of communication between Ireland and Great Britain were entirely cut off for some days. The deputation proceeded by rail to Sunderland, and appeared at a meeting of Presbytery in support of the call, which was placed in Mr. Blue's hand, and he intimated his acceptance of it—to the delight of the deputation, but to the regret of his many friends in England. The deputies had some difficulty in getting home; but being informed that the Scotch boats were sailing to Belfast, they decided to cross by Glasgow. However, the train service was so deranged, owing to the

measures taken to combat the trouble in Ireland, that they were unable to reach Glasgow in time to catch the steamer, and they were compelled to wait another day. Before being allowed to embark for Ireland they had to undergo a severe cross-examination to explain their business, and to satisfy the authorities of their bona fides. When they arrived home they found that their friends had been for some days without any information from them, although both letters and telegrams had been dispatched almost daily, but these had been held up owing to the fact that military law had been declared in Ireland.

The Rev. Alexander Wylie Blue was installed in the pastorate of the congregation on 25th May, 1916. Rev. D. H. Maconachie, B.D., Holywood, preached the installation sermon from the text, "Jesus saith unto them, have faith in God." Rev. A. J. Wilson, D.D., put the prescribed questions to the new minister, and these being satisfactorily answered, Mr. Blue signed the Confession of Faith. The installation prayer was offered by the Moderator of the Belfast Presbytery, Rev. John Irwin, D.D., and the Rev. Professor S. Law Wilson delivered the charge to Mr. Blue and the congregation. The benediction having been pronounced, an adjournment was made to the Church Halls, where, through the hospitality of Mr. James Johnston, J.P., a large number of the members of the congregation and the members of the Belfast Presbytery, also a number of specially invited guests, were entertained to a sumptuous luncheon. This was a unique function, as it partook of the nature of a civic reception to Mr. Blue, it being attended by the Lord Mayor, the High Sheriff, the majority of the members of the Corporation, and also members of other Public Boards in the city. Mr. Blue's old congregation in Sunderland was also represented by a number of its leading members.

A reception was held in the evening in the church

buildings, to enable the congregation to meet and welcome Mr. and Mrs. Blue. Mr. James Johnston, J.P., presided. Pulpit robes were presented to Mr. Blue, and a bouquet and a drawing-room carpet to Mrs. Blue. Mr. and Mrs. Blue returned thanks for the gifts, after which a number of congratulatory speeches were made, and a musical programme was submitted.

On the following Sabbath, 28th May, Mr. Blue occupied the pulpit, when he preached with much acceptance to overflowing congregations at both services.

Rev. Alexander Wylie Blue was born in Campbeltown, and studied at the University of Glasgow and at the Theological College of the United Presbyterian Church, Edinburgh. During the last year of his college course he had charge of a preaching station in the mining village of Forth, Lanarkshire. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Greenock, in which the U.P. Churches of Kintyre were then included. After the usual six months' probation he was called to the important city congregation of John Street, Glasgow, where he was ordained on the 27th April, 1900. His eloquent preaching and genial personality attracted large crowds, and at the end of five years he was called to succeed the Rev. Jackson Smyth Wood, M.A. in St. George's Church, Sunderland, one of the largest congregations in the North of England. He had eleven years' successful ministry in this sphere before being invited to become the pastor of May Street.

For some months prior to Mr. Blue's settlement in the congregation, Rev. R. S. Craig, now of West Church, Ballymena, but at that time a licentiate, acted as assistant. Mr. Craig, with his brother, Rev. James Craig, now of Portstewart, had joined the church under Mr. McCaughan's ministry, and both were members of the choir. The Rev. R. S. Craig was really the first person to mention Mr. Blue's

name to the session clerk, many months before the name was finally submitted to the committee. Shortly after receiving a call to Ballymena, Mr. Craig was made the recipient of a presentation from his friends in May Street.

In the month of February, 1917, the Government issued a 5 per cent. War Loan. Mr. Blue referred to the matter from the pulpit, and urged the members to do all in their power to make it a great success, and thereby help the nation to victory. A special meeting of committee was called, and Mr. R. T. Gray submitted a scheme by which £5 or any multiple of £5 might be subscribed for, and the payments made by monthly instalments spread over a period of two years. The scheme was adopted by the committee, and circulars explaining it were distributed. The response exceeded expectation, a total amount of almost £17,000 being applied for. The bank advanced the money on the signature of three trustees; and the committee in charge attended in the committee-room on the first Monday of each month to receive payment of instalments, which were punctually made, and the whole scheme was completed and the bank repaid in the time specified. The trustees for the scheme were H. M. Pollock, James Johnston, and James McCance. Mr. Pollock, the present Minister of Finance in the Government of Northern Ireland, has been long a member of the congregation, and he has rendered valuable assistance in various efforts in connection with the church. He acted as the original treasurer to the Organ and Improvement Fund. He was heartily congratulated on being appointed chairman of the Belfast Harbour Board, and on his election to the presidency of the Chamber of Commerce; and, at a later date, on his appointment as Deputy Lieutenant for the city.

On the last Sabbath of December, 1917, at a special meeting of committee, Mr. Blue informed those present

SESSION, 1929

Back: Robert Osborne, Andrew Beggs, Robert T. Gray

Interior of Church

that it had been his desire for some time past to take up duty with the troops at the front, and that he had volunteered for service in connection with Y.M.C.A. work. He had received intimation the previous day that his offer had been accepted. Before finally arranging the matter, he wished the sanction of the members of session and committee. The proposal was cordially agreed to, and Mr. Blue intimated that he would be away for the months of February, March, April, and May. His departure was delayed until the middle of March, and a farewell meeting was held on the 11th of that month, the Lord Mayor (Mr. James Johnston) and the Lady Mayoress acting as host and hostess to a large company on the occasion. Mr. Blue arrived in France immediately before the final German push in the neighbourhood of Amiens, and saw something of the retreat of the allied forces. Later he spent most of his time behind the Ypres lines, and made many friends amongst those on active service. After his return Mr. Blue delivered a lecture, the proceeds of which were devoted to war charities.

At a congregational meeting held on 23rd April, 1919, there being then only two surviving trustees of the church building, namely, William McCracken Wilson and John Woods, the following were appointed additional trustees: Hugh McDowell Pollock, Sir James Johnston, John Williamson, Dr. Samuel Edwin Albert Acheson, William John Price, William Moorehead, and John McCann.

At the close of the Great War a special memorial service was held in the church on 29th June, 1919, when collections were taken towards defraying the cost of a War Memorial Tablet, which amounted to £525. This tablet contains 227 names of those in connection with the church who took some part in the great conflict, 40 of whom laid down their lives in the service of King and Country. The memorial was unveiled by Sir James Craig, now Lord Craigavon.

The congregation also assisted in the erection of the Presbyterian War Memorial in Howard Street by subscribing £400, which entitled the church to have its name inscribed on four rooms in the hostel. This was in addition to some large private subscriptions from members of the congregation.

In October, 1919, Rev. Robert Hyndman conducted a very successful series of evangelistic meetings, and the session recorded its appreciation of Mr. Hyndman's services at a meeting held at the close of the mission. At this meeting Mr. Blue announced that he had been invited to represent the General Assembly on a deputation from the Protestant Churches of Ireland, to visit the United States of America and explain to the American people the position of Ulster. He was absent about four months on this mission in the spring of 1920. On his return he received a most enthusiastic welcome from the members of the congregation and friends at a largely attended meeting held in the Assembly Hall.

On Thursday, 20th November, 1919, a meeting was held in the Lower Hall to welcome home the soldiers, sailors, and other service men who had taken part in the Great War. The hall was crowded by an enthusiastic audience. Mr. Blue occupied the chair, and a specially designed scroll was presented to those who had served.

CHAPTER XI

Visitation by Presbytery—Insurance—Finances—F.W.O.—Visits of Mr. Blue to U.S.A.—Dr. Cooke's Grave—Semi-Jubilee of Mr. Blue—Debt Extinction Fund.

SHORTLY after the close of the war a Victory Thanksgiving Fund was started, with the object of defraying the cost of the War Memorial, and, if possible, reducing the balance of debt incurred in connection with the improvements and installation of the organ. It was reported to the committee that a total of £1,692 was subscribed in connection with this scheme.

The Presbytery of Belfast visited the congregation on the 28th September, 1920, and the finding contains the following sentence: "The Presbytery of Belfast heartily congratulates the minister, the office-bearers, and the members of May Street Church on their well-sustained and ever-increasing prosperity, as evidenced by the large congregations which assemble for worship Sabbath by Sabbath; by the very valuable additions made to the church property, in the shape of a convenient and spacious lecture hall, a beautiful organ to assist in the service of praise, and a most desirable manse for the minister; as well as by the large amount of money contributed towards congregational funds and for the liquidation of the congregational debt, but a small portion of which now remains to be paid."

In October, 1920, owing to the increase in the value of property, and the large amount which had been recently spent in improvements, it was decided to insure the property against fire in the following amounts: building, £15,000; pews, fixtures, and fittings, £7,000; organ, £2,000.

The painting of the church, both interior and exterior, was undertaken in the summer of 1921, at a cost of £875, and the church had to be closed for public worship while the work was being done. During the months of July and August the congregation worshipped in Y.M.C.A. Large Hall, Wellington Place.

At a special meeting of committee, held on 23rd February, 1922, the treasurer submitted a report on the finances of the congregation. The total indebtedness at that date was £2,132, which was a considerable increase from the previous year, caused mainly by the outlay on painting and on the War Memorial; but, apart from these special items, the income from the ordinary Sabbath collection (and the past year had established a record in this respect, the amount being £721) was not sufficient to meet current expenses, and the deficit for the year would be about £250—£80 interest to bank being included in this amount. The previous year had also shown an excess of expenditure over income. The items of outlay were examined very carefully, but it was felt that only very small economies could be effected. It was decided to take special quarterly collections; but later in the year the committee made a thorough investigation of the Weekly Freewill Offering system of church finance, and they were greatly assisted in this respect by Mr. C. K. Sandilands, who had worked the system in the Bible Class for two years previously. After mature consideration the committee decided to recommend the congregation to adopt it, and this course was agreed to at a meeting which was addressed by some friends who had experience of the system in other congregations. The system was introduced at the beginning of the following year, and has been a phenomenal success during the six years in which it has been in operation. The total income of the congregation in these six years, including bequests, has amounted to the sum of £25,126, compared with

£19,700 for the preceding six years. A great measure of this success has been due to the faithful and consistent work of the committee in charge, of which Mr. C. K. Sandilands was the first convener, a position which has been filled by Mr. W. J. Young since Mr. Sandiland's departure to live in England.

In April, 1923, Mr. Blue accepted an invitation to attend and speak at a conference at Stony Brook, Long Island, U.S.A., which necessitated his absence from the middle of July until the end of September. He was accompanied on this trip by Mrs. Blue. His services to the conference were appreciated, and the invitation was repeated, and again accepted, in 1925, but on this occasion his visit was of shorter duration. During his absence the pulpit was occupied by three distinguished American preachers: on two Sabbaths by Rev. John Timothy Stone, D.D., of Fourth Church, Chicago; and by the Rev. Olin McKendree Jones, Ph.D., of Philadelphia, and Rev. Henry Chapman Swearingen, D.D., of St. Paul's, on one Sabbath each.

During the morning service on 13th April, 1924, news reached the church of the death of Sir James Johnston. A special meeting of session and committee was held at the close of the service, at which Mr. Blue referred to Sir James's interest in the church and city, and all that pertained to the welfare of the community. A memorial service was held in the church on the following Sabbath, at which the Lord Mayor, members of the City Corporation, and members of Parliament were present, as Sir James, in addition to being a leading member of the Corporation, had been elected a member of the first Senate of Northern Ireland.

Early in 1924 it was reported to the committee that the memorial on Dr. Cooke's grave in Balmoral Cemetery was badly out of repair, and, as it was not possible to get into communication with any representative of the family, the committee decided to have it put in order, and defrayed the cost of renovation.

On 27th April, 1925, Rev. A. Wylie Blue completed his semi-jubilee as a minister of the Gospel. The occasion was celebrated at an enthusiastic meeting held in the Church Halls. Representatives were present from Mr. Blue's previous congregations—John Street, Glasgow, and St. George's, Sunderland. Mr. Blue was presented with pulpit robes by the ladies of the congregation, and he and Mrs. Blue were asked to accept two easy chairs from the congregation. Congratulatory messages were received from former fellow-students of Mr. Blue, and many complimentary speeches were delivered by members of the Presbytery, office-bearers in the church, and friends from across the channel.

Shortly afterwards the committee recommended Mr. Blue and the session to appoint a licentiate assistant, and undertook to pay the salary of same. As no suitable assistant was available, Mr. Blue decided to purchase a motor-car, and when the matter was brought before the committee it was unanimously agreed that £100 should be voted annually towards upkeep and running expenses of the car. At the annual meeting in 1928 Mr. Blue expressed the wish that the congregation should pay off the debt, which then amounted to about £600, before the centenary of the congregation, which was to take place in October of the following year; and, as a start towards this object, he handed back the cheque for £100 which had been voted to him to cover his motor expenses. Since that date some heavy expenditure has been incurred, in the way of new electric light fittings, repairs to roof damaged by storm, and painting, amounting to about £450 in all. With the object of liquidating the debt the committee decided to ask for special offerings, to be brought in on the first Sabbath of 1929, and a sum of £184 was received. Special envelopes were also issued for the convenience of those who preferred to give weekly or monthly.

A visitation of the congregation by the Presbytery of Belfast took place on Tuesday, 27th March, 1928, when a very favourable Finding was recorded. Special reference was made to the large addition to the number of communicants; to the organisations for the benefit of the young; to the work in Cromac Square; and to the praise service, led by a highly capable organist and choir. The Presbytery expressed its gratification at the generous bequests to the congregation by those who had been liberal supporters during their lifetime.

A congress in connection with the British Deaf and Dumb Associations was held in Belfast in August, 1928, and under its auspices a most interesting service was held in the church on Sabbath evening, the 5th August. Rev. Dr. Gibson, minister of Cooke's Church, Toronto, was the special preacher for the day, and many of the delegates attended. Mr. W. J. Stewart, who is associated with the Mission to Adult Deaf and Dumb, acted as interpreter during the opening exercises, and the sermon was interpreted by Rev. R. W. Dodds, chaplain to the deaf and dumb. The congregation paid rapt attention to all the proceedings, and it was a pleasure to see the bright and happy faces of the delegates, a large number of whom were present.

CHAPTER XII

THE SESSION

Regulations *re* Baptism—Robert Workman resigned—The Session lapsed.

When the congregation was organised there was no session for some few years. A minute of committee, dated 30th January, 1834, reads: "Resolved, that Charles Blackwood, J. Potts, and Robert Workman be appointed to wait on Dr. Cooke, to request him to follow up the plans formerly laid down respecting the formation of an eldership." Accordingly, on the 30th March, the following persons were appointed as elders: John Potts, Robert Workman, Jun., James Hill, David Rodgers, Daniel Browne, Charles Blackwood, Jun., and Samuel Gelston.

The first meeting of session was held on Thursday, 3rd April, when David Rodgers was appointed session clerk. It was resolved at this meeting that a congregational prayer meeting be held in the school-room on Sabbath mornings at 7 o'clock, to continue one hour each morning; the first meeting to be held on the 13th inst., the services to consist of praise, reading the scriptures, and prayer. Messrs. Potts and Workman were appointed to make out a list of communicants. The congregation was divided into seven districts, and an elder appointed for each. At a meeting held on 14th May of the same year, it was resolved that a more frequent observance of the Lord's Supper in this place would tend to promote the religious improvement of the people, and that the propriety of observing

this ordinance quarterly be considered at a future meeting. Dr. Cooke was not present when this resolution was adopted—indeed it seems to have been the regular custom to hold session meetings without the presence of the minister. When the question of the more frequent observance of the ordinance was considered at a later meeting, Dr. Cooke suggested that the matter should be brought before the first meeting of Synod. Mr. Potts was appointed to accompany Dr. Cooke to the meeting of Synod at Derry, and present an overture on the subject. Later, Mr. Potts reported that when he left the meeting the overture had not been brought forward, but that Dr. Cooke would attend to it. Dr. Cooke on his return reported that the Synod did not think that there should be any specific law on the subject, as it was already provided that the ordinance might be observed as often as each session thought necessary.

The following were the services in connection with the observance of the Lord's Supper: one service on the Fast Day at 11 o'clock, and one on the evening of the same day at 7 o'clock. The service on Saturday to be at 7 o'clock in the evening, and the service on Monday at half-past 7 in the morning. It was also required that all intending communicants who did not communicate the last time should hand their names to the elders of their respective districts during the week. Strict regulations were also drawn up regarding baptism, which was appointed to take place publicly on the first Sabbath of each month. Those applying for the first time for baptism of children were required to submit their certificates from their former congregations.

David Rodgers resigned on 4th March, 1835, and Charles Blackwood was appointed as session clerk. On 7th October, 1835, it was reported that the number of communicants present on the previous Sabbath was 500, and in April following the number

was reported as about 480. In June, 1835, Dr. Cooke was asked to preach expressly for the young of the congregation, with a view to the formation of classes for catechism in the congregation; and it was afterwards resolved "that classes be formed of the young of the congregation for regular catechising, and for this purpose they be requested to attend on Monday evening at 6 o'clock in the session room, where John Gamble, our catechist, and the members of session will be in attendance."

Robert Workman, Jun., presided at a meeting of the Belfast Voluntary Association on 5th September, 1836, at which resolutions were adopted which were considered to reflect on the character of Dr. Cooke. The resolutions were published, with a foot-note intimating that the chairman was a ruling elder in May Street Church, but not giving the name. A meeting of session was called to inquire whether any elder had so presided, when Robert Workman acknowledged that he had been chairman, but stated that he had wished the resolutions to be differently worded, and that his name as elder should not be published in connection with the statement. A resolution was passed condemning his action, and two days later he resigned the office of ruling elder in May Street Church, but he continued a member of the congregation for some years afterwards.

Thereafter there are few records of the meetings of session. Two meetings were recorded as being held in 1837, and one on 28th March, 1838, after which there is the following note: "N.B.—After this date meetings of the eldership were regularly held on each Lord's Day morning, at which the business of the discipline of the church was introduced and settled, and, as occasion required, members appointed to attend the Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies. But meetings at other times being found inconvenient, none else were held, unless on the week-days connected

with the communion; and it became unnecessary to enter special minutes of discipline, as all baptisms were celebrated through the recommendation of the session."

Then, in October, 1855, there is this minute: "The persons appointed to attend the visitation of Presbytery, to be held by adjournment in the church on the 1st Tuesday in December, were: from the session, Samuel Gelston and Charles Blackwood; and from the congregation, A. J. Macrory, John Lindsay, Lieut-Col. Macpherson, Samuel G. Getty, and Wm. McIlwrath." There is no further entry in the minute book of the session during Dr. Cooke's ministry, and, as has already been mentioned, Mr. A. J. Macrory, at the annual meetings of the congregation in 1864 and 1865, after all the members of the first session had passed away, strongly urged the appointment of elders, but no steps were taken to form a session until after the settlement of Rev. J. S. MacIntosh as pastor in the congregation.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SESSION (continued)

New Session appointed—Discussion *re* Name of Church—Cottage Meetings—Mr. MacIntosh's Visit to Spain.

On 29th March, 1871, three years after the installation of Rev. J. S. MacIntosh, a commission of Presbytery met to instal and ordain the following elders: James Nesbitt, Thomas McCann, Robert Beggs, Thomas H. Browne, Samuel Johnston, Robert Gibson, Samuel Gelston, Wm. Hogg, and A. Russell. The last named was the Rev. Alex. Russell, LL.D., retired minister, formerly of Newtownards; and Samuel Gelston was the son of the gentleman of the same name who figured so largely in the early history of the church, having been a member of the first session, and whose death a few years previously left no surviving member of that session.

Mr. William Hogg joined the congregation about the time of Mr. MacIntosh's settlement, and he was elected on the committee in 1869, and afterwards on the session. He was a man of deep piety, and he discharged his duties as elder with great diligence and with much acceptance. He had been in business in Ann Street, and on his retirement some years before his death, which took place in 1889, he was succeeded by John Rea. His son, John Hogg, was an influential member of Rosemary Street Church, and Councillor Frank Holland is a grandson.

At the first meeting of this session James Nesbitt was appointed session clerk, and at this meeting it was decided to introduce printed cards instead of metal

tokens for communicants. It was also decided to arrange congregational districts, and to appoint an elder over each. No private baptism was administered without the consent of the session, and special reasons had to be submitted. When such consent was given, two elders were appointed to accompany the minister and attend at the baptism.

At a special meeting of the congregation on 8th April, 1872, called for the purpose of approving of the repairs to the church, a resolution was moved by Thomas McClinton, and seconded by J. H. Haslett: "That the minister, session, and committee take such steps as may be necessary to have the name of Dr. Cooke attached to the church, so that the church should be known as 'The Cooke Church.'" Several members took exception to this resolution, as no notice whatever had been given to the congregation. However, the motion was put and passed, Mr. Alexander Cuming's dissent being entered in the minutes. There thus arose a controversy which continued for over two years. At the next annual meeting the matter was again raised, when the session clerk pointed out that the resolution could not be acted upon by the session, as eight days' notice should have been given, and that it would take two-thirds majority of the congregation to effect a change in the name. The session suggested to this meeting that instead of altering the well-known designation of the church, that a marble slab should be placed in the front of the building, bearing the following inscription: "This House was erected in 1829 as a Church of God, wherein Henry Cooke might preach the Everlasting Gospel, to the Glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." A resolution was proposed that the name of the church should be changed to "The Cooke Church," but it failed to get the necessary support, and the recommendation of the session was accepted. However, the agitation continued, and on 10th March,

1873, two memorials were presented to the session—one asking for a further meeting of the congregation to consider the change of the name, and this was signed by 186 members; the other, asking for carrying out the compromise, was signed by 203 members. The decision of the session was, "that without showing any preference for either memorial, in view of the excited state of feeling in the congregation, it is not expedient to hold another meeting on the subject of the name of the church." A year later a further compromise was agreed to by Mr. Haslett, that the inscription should be:—

"THE MEMORIAL CHURCH.
ERECTED 1829
FOR THE
REV. HENRY COOKE, D.D., LL.D.,

in recognition of his eminent and successful labors in the cause of Truth against the prevailing errors of the time."

This, however, did not satisfy some of those who wished a change, and when the proposal came before the congregation, in April, 1874, it was moved as an amendment that the wording should be, "The Memorial Church of Rev. Henry Cooke, etc." This was defeated, and the revised wording was adopted. The inscription is not very satisfactory; the original proposal of the session would have been more appropriate.

On 2nd September, 1874, Rev. J. S. MacIntosh, moderator, reported to the session that Mr. V. A. Williams, who had superintended the Sabbath-school for some time, was leaving Belfast to commence business in Bristol, and it was decided to present him with an Address and a Family Bible, as an expression of esteem and regard.

The session had the oversight of cottage meetings, which were held regularly in Henrietta, Keegan,

Norton, Seymour, and Welsh Streets, and one member was appointed to attend each of these meetings for a period of a month.

In June, 1878, Mr. Hogg and Mr. Browne were appointed to wait upon a member to remonstrate regarding keeping shop open for sale of drink on the Sabbath. They were not successful in their efforts, but the offender promised to send the children to the Sabbath-school. As the member was not a communicant, the session decided to proceed no further in the matter, except to ask the deputation to have another interview.

Mr. MacIntosh was convener of the Continental Mission in connection with the General Assembly from 1873 until 1881, and in the winter of 1879 he visited Spain, by order of the Mission Board, to inspect the work carried on by the Mission in that country. Early in 1880 he reported to the session that he had been invited to attend the meetings of the Pan-Presbyterian Council, to be held in Philadelphia; and at a later meeting he reported that he had arranged supplies for the pulpit during his absence, from 29th August till 24th October inclusive. Soon after his return he received two calls, to which reference has already been made, and he resigned the pastorate on 4th January, 1881. During the vacancy Rev. Professor Watts, D.D., acted as moderator of session.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SESSION (continued)

Rev. R. J. Lynd's Ministry—Death of Mr. James Nesbitt—Additional Elders—Deaths of Mr. J. B. McAuley and Mr. James Maxwell —Trustees—Instrumental Music—Election of Elders.

Rev. R. J. Lynd was installed minister of May Street Church on 31st January, 1882. In October of the same year Mr. James Nesbitt died, and the following minute was adopted by the session: "The session beg to record their sense of the loss they have sustained in the death of one of their number, the late James Nesbitt. In recalling the history of May Street they find that Mr. Nesbitt was identified with the church from boyhood; became a prominent member in the management of its affairs from early manhood; and enjoyed the warm personal friendship of Dr. Cooke and the ministers who succeeded him. In every department of church work he discharged with fidelity and rare ability the duties entrusted to him. The universal confidence he enjoyed in the congregation was evidenced by the fact that for a great number of years he was chosen as secretary of committee, and afterwards clerk of session. In the latter office, of which we were chiefly cognisant, we ever found him a wise and judicious counsellor, a faithful fellow-labourer, and a warm friend. Every member feels his death as a personal loss; and whilst we shall long miss his presence, we rejoice in the universal respect, the high esteem, and the sincere friendship he enjoyed till a ripe old age, dying at last in peace and quiet

COMMITTEE, 1929

Back: Frank Rea, Chas. A. Gray, Dr. R. Thomson, Edward G. Frame, Andrew Gibson, Alexander M. Clark
Centre: M. D. M'Combe, Wm. M. Cuthbert, Wm. H. Allen, Wm. C. Clements, Wm. M. Bell, Robert Edwards, Jas. Carlisle, John Warwick

ARCHIBALD LYNN
City Missionary, Cromac Square Mission

confidence in the Redeemer. They beg further to express their profound sympathy with his bereaved widow and family, and pray that the Husband of the widow and the Father of the fatherless may have them in His holy keeping, and comfort them with divine consolation. Their loss is great; all the greater because of the many virtues of the deceased, but the Lord is able to make all grace abound towards them. And it is the earnest hope and confidence of the session of May Street that each member of the family may be long spared to cherish the memory of the departed, and to emulate his undemonstrative Christian walk."

Mr. William Hogg was appointed session clerk in succession to Mr. Nesbitt. Prior to Mr. MacIntosh's resignation an effort was made to increase the number of the members of session; but only three persons consented to be nominated, and his resignation put an end to the proposal. However, on the 23rd February, 1885, the following additional elders were elected: David Mitchell being installed, and James Best, James L. Hamilton, James H. Haslett, James Flinn, John C. Hunter, John B. McAuley, James Maxwell, and John Woods being ordained. In this year it was decided that May Street and Rosemary Street congregations should worship together during the months of July and August, an arrangement which continued for twenty-one years. In October, Mr. Hogg wished to resign the position of session clerk, but consented to continue if an assistant was appointed. Mr. J. B. McAuley was appointed to assist, but he fell into ill-health, and died in 1888, and for these three years Mr. J. C. Hunter kept the records, but he declined to be appointed to the official position of clerk. Another member, Mr. James Maxwell, died shortly after being ordained, and in fact he was never able to attend a meeting of session. On 23rd November, 1886, it was intimated to the

session that the committee had unanimously recommended Mr. Samuel Leighton as a suitable candidate for precentorship, and it was moved, seconded, and passed that he be appointed. On 3rd December, 1886, Mr. T. H. Browne reported that Mr. J. Sloan desired to resign from the mission district in order to take up work in the Shankill district; and shortly afterwards Mr. John Beattie was appointed to Lagan mission district.

On 11th May, 1887, it was decided in future to hold the communion in the pews. Hitherto it had been the practice to have tables in the aisles, and the communicants filed out of the pews in succession and took their seats at these tables. This had to be done at least three times in order to accommodate all the communicants.

At a meeting of session held on 25th November, 1887, the question arose as to the necessity of appointing trustees for congregational property, and in view of an approaching visitation by the Presbytery, it was decided to call a congregational meeting on 14th December for the purpose, and at that meeting the following were appointed: Sir James H. Haslett, Thomas McCann, John C. Hunter, Wm. M. Wilson, John Stevenson, Alex. Cuming, John Woods, Hugh Porter, Wm. J. Williamson, and Jackson McGown. The original tenure of the property was a lease for lives, renewable for ever, and this was converted into a fee-farm grant.

Thos. H. Browne was appointed session clerk on 2nd March, 1888, and he continued in office for a period of seven years. At a meeting in January, 1891, it was suggested that steps should be taken to add to the eldership, and on 31st March, 1892, the Presbytery installed Geo. H. Elliott, who had been an elder in the Presbyterian Church of England, and ordained Wm. Marshall, John Stevenson, and John Williamson.

A visitation of Presbytery was held on 3rd May,

1892. It was stated in the Finding that there were many indications of spiritual life and progress, especially as manifested in the growth of a missionary spirit and the increase of missionary contributions, and in the encouraging report of the work going on in the mission district.

On 23rd February, 1895, Mr. Thomas H. Browne resigned his position as session clerk, and Mr. John Stevenson was unanimously elected to the office, which he filled with acceptance until his resignation in 1907, when he joined Fisherwick Church, in which he now occupies the position of session clerk.

In the autumn of 1895 a very successful series of evangelistic meetings was conducted by Mr. John Anderson, who made a deep impression by his earnest gospel appeals.

Early in 1897 it was reported that the average attendance at communion services for five years was 260, and that there were then 478 on the roll.

Under date of 16th January, 1898, there is a minute with reference to the death of Mrs. Lynd, and a copy of a letter from the session to Dr. Lynd on the occasion. In March of the same year the death of Mr. James Flinn, a member of session, is recorded.

In March, 1898, a letter was received from the choirmaster asking the permission of the session for the use of the harmonium at the Wednesday evening prayer meetings. The consideration of this request was twice deferred, but shortly afterwards the use of the instrument was introduced at these meetings.

The session clerk reported, on 2nd September, 1898, that he had received a letter from Mr. John Beattie, the church's missionary in Cromac district, announcing his resignation. The session, feeling that in Mr. Beattie they had a man specially fitted for missionary work, and being very desirous of retaining his services, requested the clerk of session to convey to Mr. Beattie an expression of satisfaction with his work in the

past, and their wish that he could see his way to withdraw his resignation. Mr. Beattie agreed to remain. He had previously declined to transfer to another district at a higher salary.

In October, 1899, Rev. Dr. Lynd was invited to visit Australia, but, after conferring with the session on the subject, he decided to decline the invitation.

On 1st January, 1901, the first day of the 20th century, a united communion service was held in the church, the ground floor being crowded with communicants. For some few years afterwards the Presbytery of Belfast observed the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at their first meeting each new year, and usually in May Street Church.

On 11th January, 1903, at the invitation of Sir Jas. H. Haslett, the session met in his house, Princess Gardens, and reference was made to the lamented death of Mr. Thomas McCann, which had taken place the previous month. A discussion took place on the subject of the use of instrumental music and the Assembly's Authorised Hymnary in the church services, and some members were asked to confer with several members of the congregation for the purpose of eliciting an expression of opinion on the subject. It was not until September of that year that it was decided to ask the opinion of the congregation, when a circular with a voting slip attached was sent to every seat-holder. The result was that 272 voted for instrumental music and 70 against. The majority being so large, the session decided to introduce the use of the organ on the first Sabbath in October. The organ had been supplied by Sir James H. Haslett some weeks previously. A few seat-holders left the church at the time of the introduction of instrumental music, but it is gratifying to recall that many of them rejoined the congregation later.

In January, 1904, on the advice of Sir Wm. Whitla, the session agreed to send James Kennedy, the popular

church officer, who suffered severely from rheumatism, to Nantwich for four weeks' treatment by brine baths. Great benefit was derived from the treatment.

For some time the necessity of increasing the number of elders engaged the attention of the session, and the moderator was asked to bring the matter before the congregation, with the result that, on the 12th October, 1906, the Presbytery ordained the following: Thomas Bell, John Clements, William James Lewis, Wm. P. McDowell, Robert Culbert, John Topping, John Frame, and Robert Lynas. Both Mr. Clements and Mr. Culbert have sons in the ministry of our Church. These elders officiated at the communion service on the first Sabbath of November, and on the 17th of the same month Dr. Lynd passed away.

CHAPTER XV

THE SESSION (continued)

Resignation of Mr. John Stevenson—Unfermented Wine introduced —Resignation and Death of Mr. J. C. Hunter—Individual Communion Cups—Election of Elders—Death of Mr. Thos. Bell —Day of Humiliation and Prayer—Death of Mr. D. Mitchell.

The Rev. W. J. McCaughan, moderator, who succeeded Dr. Lynd, reported on 1st November, 1907, that he had received the resignation of Mr. John Stevenson as session clerk, and it was decided to ask Mr. John C. Hunter to accept the office, which he consented to do. The following year the use of unfermented wine was introduced at the observance of the Lord's Supper. Toward the close of 1909 Mr. Hunter resigned the office of session clerk on account of failing health. He, however, continued to act until the close of the year, and Mr. John Williamson was nominated to succeed him. Mr. Hunter shortly afterwards went to reside in Scotland, where he died in 1914.

On Sabbath, 4th October, 1914, a special meeting of session and committee was held immediately after the morning service, consequent on the receipt of the news of the death of Mr. John C. Hunter, at Kilbarchan, Scotland. The following minute was adopted: "That this meeting, having heard with great grief of the death of their old and trusted colleague, Mr. J. C. Hunter, desire to give expression to their sorrow, and to convey to the members of Mr. Hunter's family their deep sympathy with them in their irreparable loss. Mr. Hunter was a member of this church for upwards of 40 years, being connected with it through-

out the entire length of his long sojourn in Ireland. He filled the offices of secretary to the Literary Society, secretary to the Church Guild, secretary to the congregational committee, and session clerk, and no organisation ever had a more capable, trustworthy, and faithful servant. The extent of the services rendered by him to the congregation will probably never be realised. Year in and year out he carried out the work with incomparable ability and fidelity. The church records bear permanent testimony to the perfect manner in which he discharged his duties; but it is as a wise and genial counsellor, and true and loyal comrade, that Mr. Hunter's memory will ever shine brightest in the hearts of his colleagues. They feel that the example of his character will continue to bear fruit and influence generation after generation of office-bearers of May Street Church long after his own generation has passed away."

On 5th May, 1912, individual communion cups were introduced for the first time in the observance of the sacrament in the church, and on the same evening the sacrament was observed in Cromac Square Mission Hall. There was also an additional observance of the sacrament in the church on the last Sabbath evening of that year.

A visitation by the Presbytery was held on 1st October of the same year, and in the Finding the following sentence occurs: "Perhaps this historic congregation has never been in a more prosperous state than it is at this moment."

Towards the end of 1913 an election of elders took place, and on the 18th January, 1914, the Presbytery installed William C. Leeburn (who had been ordained in Macrory Memorial Church), and ordained Dr. Samuel E. A. Acheson, Archibald Lynn, William Moorehead, Wm. John Petticrew, and William John Price as elders, and appointed them to the oversight of the congregation.

The death of Thos. Bell was reported at a meeting of session held in August, 1914. He had rendered valuable service in every department of church work. He was a devoted elder, a faithful teacher in the Sabbath-school for many years, a regular attender at the weekly prayer meeting, and a zealous worker for the success of God's cause in our midst.

At the same meeting Dr. Patterson announced that Rev. Joseph Cordner, B.D., would conduct a special mission in May Street from 4th till 11th October. The services in connection with this mission were so successful that the meetings were continued for three days in the following week.

On account of the war, 3rd January, 1915, was appointed as a Day of National Humiliation and Prayer, and it was decided by the session to hold a meeting each night, except Saturday, throughout the week beginning on that date. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed in Cromac Square Mission Hall on the evening of the Day of Humiliation and Prayer. At this time Dr. Acheson was nominated by the session for membership of the committee of the Belfast City Mission, and he was shortly afterwards appointed. He has since taken a very active interest in the management of the Mission.

Mr. David Mitchell died on 23rd February, 1915, and the session adopted the following minute: "Mr. David Mitchell joined May Street Church as a young man, and always evinced the deepest interest in its welfare. For a few years he worshipped in Berry Street under Dr. (then Mr.) R. J. Lynd, to whom he was a staunch and faithful friend. In this latter congregation he was ordained to the eldership. When Mr. Lynd became minister of May Street, Mr. Mitchell again joined the congregation, and at an election of elders held shortly afterwards he was elected to the session. He was installed on 23rd February, 1885, so that on the day of his death he had completed

exactly thirty years of service as a member of May Street session. In 1903 he was elected treasurer of the congregation, and, although at that time and for a few years afterwards the membership of the congregation was comparatively small, by his zeal and example he so stimulated the liberality of the congregation that the work was maintained free from debt until more prosperous years arrived. He also subscribed most liberally to the improvements carried out in the church property last year. As long as health permitted he was regular in attendance at the services of the sanctuary, and, whilst his presence and wise counsel will be much missed, we rejoice to think that he is now removed to a higher service."

CHAPTER XVI

THE SESSION (continued)

Resignation of Dr. Patterson—Death of Mr. J. Frame—Election of Elders—Death of Mr. J. Clements—Mission by the Maréchale—Death of Rev. Dr. Park—Election of Elders—Death of Mr. J. Woods.

Rev. Dr. Patterson resigned on 31st March, 1915, and Rev. A. W. Blue succeeded him as pastor and moderator of session, being installed 25th May, 1916.

Mr. John Frame died on 3rd February, 1917, and the session met after the morning service on the following day, and passed a special resolution with reference to his work in the church. He was for many years a devoted member, and took a deep interest in the spiritual and material prosperity of the congregation. He acted as one of the secretaries to the committee for some years, and was most painstaking in the discharge of the duties of the office. He was a most faithful member of session, and in later years the Orphan Society had his special care, and he devoted his energies to awaken an interest in this noble society.

At an election of elders held in November, 1920, no fewer than 67 members were nominated. The session decided to interview 16, who had received the highest number of votes, of whom nine consented to act, and on 30th January, 1921, the Presbytery ordained Andrew Beggs, Thomas E. S. Crozier, Wm. Ferguson, Robert T. Gray, Wm. Harvey, Samuel Hogg, Arthur E. Moore, William Sharp, and William T. Smith.

On the death of Mr. John Clements the following

minute was adopted by the session: "Mr. John Clements, who passed away on Sabbath morning, 23rd January, 1921, was for many years an honoured and respected member of this congregation, and he was deeply interested in every activity of the church. In the office of elder he served the congregation well and faithfully, being seldom absent from the weekly prayer meeting, and attending regularly both Sabbath services whilst his health permitted. For many years he made the maintenance of the church properties his special care, and the committee was greatly helped by his practical experience in such matters. He was naturally of a retiring disposition, but his deep piety and quiet, earnest Christian character were an example to all. After his retirement from business some years ago, his ample leisure enabled him to devote more time to religious activities, and his presence at the many devotional and philanthropic meetings held in the city manifested his sympathy with every good work. Some years ago he had the honour to be appointed a Presbytery Elder, and he was seldom absent from its meetings. He also followed with much interest the proceedings of the General Assembly, in which he often represented the congregation in Dublin, to which his son, the Rev. Gordon T. C. Clements, ministers. He was spared beyond the three score years and ten, and he was called to pass through many months of physical suffering ere he entered into rest. We praise God for the gift of such a life to the Church, and pray that He may support and strengthen the bereaved family in their time of sorrow."

Mr. John Dunwoody was introduced to the session on 6th November, 1921, as a student for the ministry. Mr. Dunwoody was brought up in our Sabbath-school, and had a successful collegiate career. After serving two years as licentiate assistant in Castleton Church, he is now happily settled as the minister of Bellaghy and Knockcloghrim.

In accordance with an arrangement with the Central Presbyterian Association, Mrs. Booth Clibborn, known as the Maréchale, conducted a mission in the church from 28th January till 11th February, 1923. The Rev. Dr. R. C. Gillie, then of Marylebone Church, conducted the morning service on the latter date. It was a time of great spiritual awakening in Belfast and the North of Ireland. At the close of the mission the session adopted the following minute: "The session desires to put on record its sense of gratitude to God for the manifest tokens of blessing which distinguished the mission conducted by the Maréchale, assisted by her son and daughter. The great crowds which thronged the church to overflowing, often more than an hour preceding the time announced for the meetings, listened with rapt attention to the gospel message as preached by the evangelist, and many were brought to a sense of their need of a Saviour by her earnest appeals. No less than 518 persons were dealt with individually in the inquiry rooms, and signified their acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Saviour, whilst there is reason to believe that many more made the great decision in the quiet of their own hearts. The session feels an increased responsibility in guiding the young converts, and in helping them to enjoy their full Christian privileges." A series of weekly meetings was arranged specially for the converts, at which great enthusiasm was manifested, and the Christian Endeavour Society was reorganised.

Rev. Wm. Park, D.D., expired suddenly in the Assembly on 5th June, 1925, and the session of May Street met the same evening and addressed the following letter to the session and congregation of Rosemary Street:—

"Dear Friends,

The members of session of May Street Church, at a specially convened meeting held to-night, adopted a resolution of heartfelt sympathy with you in the

loss which you have sustained by the sudden death of your esteemed senior minister.

Our congregation was under great obligation to Dr. Park, and during the many years your congregation and ours worshipped together in the summer months, his ministrations were most acceptable, and he won a high place in the affections of our people. On the death of Dr. Lynd he was a member of the commission in charge of May Street, and his wise counsel was of much assistance and was highly appreciated.

We instinctively turned to him when Mr. McCaughan met with the accident which terminated fatally, and on the shortest notice he came to our aid and conducted the Sabbath services under the most trying circumstances, Mr. McCaughan having passed away on the previous evening. What made these acts of kindness all the greater was the fact that he persistently refused to accept any return for the services rendered, and he repeatedly stated that he regarded the May Street people as his own.

For years he occupied the foremost place in the courts of our Church, and his departure marks an epoch in its history. We praise God for the gift of such a man, and for the great work which He enabled him to do—not only in this, but in other lands—throughout a long life of devoted and faithful service. He was suddenly called to service above, and he died as he would have wished, surrounded by the brethren who loved him.

Our prayer is that God would comfort and sustain you and all bereaved friends in your time of sorrow.

On behalf of the session and people of May Street,

Yours in sincere sympathy,

A. Wylie Blue, *Moderator.*
John Williamson, *Clerk.*"

An election of elders took place in January, 1926, and on the 7th March the Presbytery ordained Robert

Riddell McDowell, Brice Ringland McQuiston, Robert Osborne, Ernest Rea, Charles Kevin Sandilands, and William John Young. These are all very active workers in the congregation, and are a source of strength to the session.

The death of Mr. John Woods occurred on 1st October, 1926. He had been connected with the congregation for upwards of 50 years, and had been an elder for 41 years. During all that period he had taken an active interest in the work of the congregation. He had been a teacher in the Sabbath-school, and for some years acted as superintendent. In this work he was ably assisted by the members of his family. He was noted for his sterling qualities of honesty and uprightness, and for his great love for May Street Church. He was spared to a good old age, and at the time of his death he was the father of the session. He will be held in affectionate remembrance by all who knew him.

CHAPTER XVII

Sabbath-school and Bible Classes—The Mission District—Women in the Church—Girls' Auxiliary—The Choir—Societies—The Boys' Brigade—Old Boys' Association—The Life Boys—Girls' Clubs — Ramblers' Club — Tennis Club — Badminton Club — Bequests and Donations—Centenary Meetings.

SABBATH-SCHOOL AND BIBLE CLASSES

THE Sabbath-school was originally held on the gallery of the church, and the first superintendent of whom we have any record was Mr. W. J. Doyle, and he was succeeded by Mr. V. A. Williams, who was assisted by Mr. Wm. M'Meekin as secretary. A Bible Class for young men was taught by Mr. Wm. Fearon, who became a minister of the Church and was ordained on the 26th January, 1876, in Ballinglen; later he was minister in Corvalley, Second Strabane, and Kells (Co. Meath). He died on 21st February, 1893. The class was continued by Mr. James Maxwell, and both these teachers exercised a deep spiritual influence on the members. In later years a young men's class was taught by Dr. Robert Esler, a well-known physician who resided on the Dublin Road, and he was succeeded by D. G. Barkley, M.A., LL.D., formerly Judge of the Supreme Court of the Punjaub, who, on his retirement from his official position, became joint convener with the Rev. Wm. Park, M.A., of the Foreign Mission. Mr. Wm. Macaulay was superintendent for a short period, and was succeeded by Mr. John Woods, who, in conjunction with Mr. John C. Hunter as secretary, carried on the work for many years. Mr. John

Williamson succeeded Mr. Woods as superintendent, and Dr. S. E. A. Acheson became secretary in succession to Mr. Hunter. During Mr. McCaughan's ministry Dr. Acheson became superintendent of the morning school, and Mr. R. T. Gray acted as secretary for both schools. He was assisted for a time by Mr. John Price. During this period the afternoon school was divided into senior and junior departments, and Mr. Wm. Moorehead took charge of the latter, and was succeeded by Mr. Alex. K. Macbeth, D.Sc. Later the school was reunited under Mr. John Williamson. Mr. Robert C. G. C. Acheson was secretary after Mr. Gray, and he in turn was succeeded by his brother, Mr. Sydney Acheson, the present secretary. It is interesting to note that it is over 45 years since Dr. S. E. A. Acheson and Mr. John Williamson became officially connected with the school, both having been scholars in it previously from earliest childhood.

In addition to those already mentioned, the following were connected with the school: the Rev. J. G. Phillips, to whom reference has already been made; the Very Rev. W. J. Lowe, M.A., D.D., LL.D., the General Secretary of the Church and Senior Clerk of the General Assembly, who taught in the school in the early eighties; the Rev. John M'Keown, who became minister of Second Comber and afterwards at Birmingham; the Rev. Joseph Dempster, who was ordained in Ballydown and was afterwards minister at Carlow; the Rev. Thos. E. Jones, formerly of Killymurris and at present minister of the Church of Scotland at Portsoy; the Rev. G. W. Blair, one of the first missionaries to the Jungle Tribes; the Rev. J. C. Blair, missionary to India; the Rev. W. J. Guy Macbeth, of Ballyclare; the Rev. Robert Craig, of Ballymena; the Rev. James Craig, of Portstewart, formerly of Killyleagh; the Rev. J. Wesley Megaw, of Mount Washington, New York, formerly of Ottawa; the Rev. Samuel Anderson, who was called to Sand-

Dr. Bertha Williamson
India

Miss F. M. Shepperd, L.R.A.M.

holes and afterwards to Bushmills; the Rev. Robert Acheson, of Three Hills, Alberta; the Rev. James Adamson, of West Australia; Dr. Bertha Williamson, India; the Rev. John Dunwoody, of Bellaghy and Knockloughrim; and the Rev. Frank Bryars, of Crumlin. In addition to these, the Rev. Robert Duff and Mr. Justice Dodds were teachers in Welsh Street Sabbath-school.

THE MISSION DISTRICT

At the meeting of the congregation held in 1870, the committee then appointed was recommended to take charge of one of the Town Mission districts in such a way as may be deemed right. However, it was not until December, 1877, that the session—which had been constituted in the meantime—arranged to take charge of the Lagan district. The work was carried on first in Welsh Street school-room, and afterwards in Cromac Square School.

Mr. Thomas H. Browne, who had previously been interested in a Sabbath-school conducted in Welsh Street, was the first superintendent, and Mr. J. Sloan was the missionary. The latter resigned in 1886 to take charge of another mission district, and Mr. John Beattie was appointed. Many tokens of divine blessing bore testimony to the good work carried on by these men. In 1891, when Cromac Square was opened, Mr. Thos. H. Browne secured a plot of ground from the Corporation at a reasonable price, and the congregation decided to take it over and build new schools on the site. The cost was £1,500, and £1,000 was raised by subscriptions, and the balance was cleared off in a few years, mainly through the efforts of the ladies of the congregation. The new building was opened by the Right Hon. John Young, D.L., of Fenaghy, on 1st October, 1891. The work of the mission was transferred, and a day-school was started in the new

building, of which Dr. Lynd was manager. Mr. Beattie died suddenly in March, 1907, after 20 years of work nobly done in Lagan mission district. He was survived by his widow and one daughter, who both passed away not many years after, and the balance of his estate, amounting to £394 1*s.* 1*d.*, was left to the church, and was applied to the ground rent fund, afterwards named "The McCaughan Memorial Fund." The present missionary, Mr. A. Lynn, was appointed soon afterwards, and has laboured with great zeal and marked success for the past 21 years. During Mr. McCaughan's ministry, and at his suggestion, the name of the mission was changed to Cromac Square Mission.

In August, 1926, the committee entered into negotiations for the purchase of a house as a residence for the City Missionary working in connection with the congregation, and the house and premises, No. 13, Haypark Avenue, were secured for £500, subject to an annual ground rent of £5 10*s.* The purchase was approved by the Presbytery, and by a congregational meeting held on 6th September, 1926; the congregation thus obtaining a convenient and commodious residence without adding to their liability, for shortly afterwards a bequest was received from the estate of Wm. Henry Graham Reid, who bequeathed in all £1,500 for different objects in connection with the church.

After the death of Mr. Thomas H. Browne, Mr. Thomas Bell was appointed by the session to superintend the mission Sabbath-school, and of late years Mr. D. J. Clements has acted in this capacity. Mr. Clements is a retired civil servant, and one of his sons is the Rev. Herbert V. Clements, formerly of Connor, and now of Ballysillan Church. Another is a well-known medical practitioner. Dr. S. E. A. Acheson is the present superintendent of the mission district, and was for many years manager of the day-school prior to the transfer to the Education Authority.

The centenary of the Belfast City Mission was observed in April, 1927, and representatives of the mission addressed many of the city congregations on the 3rd of that month. Dr. Acheson and Mr. Joseph Donnelly (missionary in the New Lodge Road district in connection with Duncairn congregation) spoke from May Street pulpit, and gave a very interesting account of the work done by the mission.

Early in 1927 the congregation, with the approval of the Presbytery, consented to the transfer of Cromac Square School to the Education Authority, at the same time reserving the right to carry on mission and Sabbath-school work as heretofore. The transfer was effected by a lease for ten years from 1st April, 1927. The building still remains the property of the congregation, and on 18th February, 1929, William Marshall and the Rt. Hon. H. M. Pollock being the only two continuing trustees, the following were appointed trustees to act with them: John Williamson, William John Price, James McCance, Dr. S. E. A. Acheson, and William Moorehead.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

In the inspired record of our Saviour's life on earth we read of certain women who ministered unto Him of their substance, and in the Church to-day there are many consecrated and loving hearts ever ready to render Him their willing service. May Street Church is noted for the remarkable succession of eloquent preachers who have filled its pulpit, but perhaps the success which attended the ministry of these men was due in large measure to their partners in life. Each was blessed with a true help-meet. Of Mrs. Cooke's activities in the congregation we have no record, but we learn from her husband's letters to her that she must have been a loving wife and a devoted mother. Mrs. MacIntosh, like those who succeeded

her, was a leader whom others were proud to follow. She was secretary for the Orphan Society, took a deep interest in the Dorcas Society, and superintended a night-school for working girls—which was conducted for many years at a time when education facilities were not such as exist at the present time. To her succeeded Mrs. Lynd, who was a real source of strength to her husband, and gathered round her a loyal band of workers, who, in addition to raising funds for missionary objects, undertook many schemes for adorning and improving the church property. She was ably assisted by the Misses Haslett and the Misses McDowell, and after her death, in 1898, Mrs. John Woods and Mrs. Jackson McGown were amongst the leaders who carried on the women's work in the congregation, which was continued under the all too short presidency of Mrs. McCaughan. One of the efforts with which she was associated was a bazaar in the Assembly Hall in aid of Donegall Road Church, of which Rev. J. M. McIlrath was the minister. The women of May Street undertook the charge of a stall, and materially assisted in the raising of funds towards the liquidation of debt on that church.

Mrs. Patterson devoted herself enthusiastically to the work carried on by the women of the congregation, and during her term of office some successful sales of work were carried through, and the title of the organisation, which had hitherto been the Women's Guild, was changed to the Women's Missionary Association. Mrs. Blue has proved herself a worthy successor to those who were leaders in the past. Sales of work were held annually until four years ago, when it was decided to substitute a week of self-denial, in which the members of the congregation were asked to deny themselves some luxury, and devote the amount thus saved to missionary objects. The result has been very satisfactory, and more money has been

raised (with less effort) than formerly, and this has been supplemented by mission boxes, which are placed in many homes.

A meeting was held on the 13th October, 1927, to say farewell to Dr. Bertha Williamson, who had been accepted for mission work in India. Tea was served in the Lower Hall, after which the Rev. A. Wylie Blue presided over a large gathering in the church. Amongst the speakers were Dr. Margaret McNeill, who had been twenty-eight years in China; Dr. James B. Hanna, of India; Miss Park; and the Rev. J. B. Woodburn, M.A., D.D. Mrs. Blue, on behalf of the ladies of the congregation, presented Dr. Williamson with a silver tea-service and salver, together with a wallet of notes for the purchase of medical books. Dr. Williamson returned thanks, after which the choir sang "The Lord bless thee and keep thee," and the Rev. R. H. Boyd led in prayer. Dr. Williamson is at present stationed at Borsad, Gujarat, India.

GIRLS' AUXILIARY

May Street Church has a very successful branch of the Girls' Auxiliary, under the leadership of Miss Lily Wallace. The meetings are held in the Church Parlour on Friday evenings, and great missionary enthusiasm is manifested by the members, who have raised large sums by personal effort and by various schemes. The object for which they are working at present is to raise sufficient funds to purchase a motor-car for the use of the missionaries in Borsad, where Dr. Bertha Williamson is placed. They have the greater part of the money in the bank; but, as the need is urgent, they have invited the aid of the Women's Missionary Association and other members of the congregation to complete the fund at an early date. The members also run a Girls' Club in connection with Cromac Square Mission.

THE CHOIR

For some years after the organisation of the congregation there was no regular choir, the praise being led by a precentor, who occupied a special desk immediately in front of the pulpit, which can be seen portrayed in the illustration of the pulpit as it was originally. A Mr. Cochrane acted as precentor for a short period, and was paid at the rate of 7*s*. 6*d*. per Sabbath. On 10th August, 1830, Mr. John Crawford was appointed at a salary of £30 per annum, and he resigned on 3rd April, 1837, when Mr. Balmer was elected to fill the office. The latter resigned on 28th September, 1849, on his removal to London. On 26th October, 1849, the committee nominated Mr. John Hanlon, and recommended him to the congregation, by whom he was elected. One of his duties was stated to be "the establishment of an efficient and respectable choir." Mr. Hanlon would appear to have been a successful teacher, as he conducted a singing class, the members of which presented him with a gown, and his request to wear it during the Sabbath services was granted by the committee. Seats were provided for the accommodation of the choir in the singing gallery, which was behind and above the pulpit. Two lady singers were paid—one at the rate of £5 per annum, and the other at the rate of £2 per annum; the remuneration in both cases being increased later by £2, and £8 was offered to a bass. After five years' service Mr. Hanlon's health broke down, and during his last illness Mr. Joseph Middlemore, afterwards precentor of Fisherwick Place Church, conducted the praise service. After Mr. Hanlon's death seven candidates were selected, and each was asked to conduct the psalmody for one Sabbath. A congregational meeting was held on 26th September, 1856, to elect a precentor. Dr. Cooke presided, and paid a tribute to the late Mr. John Hanlon, who had fulfilled

the duties of precentor to the entire satisfaction of everyone connected with the church. He suggested the propriety of postponing the appointment to this important office, as he looked upon the precentor as second to the minister. However, the meeting decided to hear the candidates, who were each required to sing the tunes "Derby" and "Pembroke." After considerable discussion Mr. John McDowell, who had been precentor in Townsend Street Church, was unanimously elected. Some time afterwards Messrs. Hugh Porter and James H. Haslett were appointed by the committee to look after the management of the choir. The latter was for some time a member of the choir, and presented the first organ which was used in the public worship of the congregation. Mr. Porter received the permission of the committee to have a doorway constructed leading from the upper room, which was then used as a choir room, direct to the choir gallery. The thanks of the congregation were conveyed to Messrs. Porter and Haslett, at the annual meeting in 1864, for the great improvement in the psalmody. In 1869 it was decided to increase the salaries of the singers, and an additional sum of £25 was placed at the disposal of Mr. Haslett, making the total expenses of the choir £70 annually. About the same time Mr. Haslett was authorised to procure a harmonium for the Sabbath-school. Amongst the members of the choir for some time were Mr. W. J. Devers, who wrote and composed the music of a song which became very popular, entitled "Our Jack's come home from sea to-day," and Mr. Wm. Nesbitt, who was formerly in the employment of Mr. Thomas McCann, and afterwards in business on his own account in York Street.

The platform around the pulpit was enlarged in 1885, and to enable this to be done one of the cross pews from each side was removed, and the choir were accommodated on the enlarged platform instead of on the gallery.

The following year Mr. John McDowell, who had acted as precentor for 30 years, resigned, and he was granted a bonus of £120 in recognition of his long and faithful services. Mr. Samuel Leighton was appointed by the session to fill the vacancy, and with his gifts of leadership he soon raised the choir to a high state of efficiency. He resigned after four years to take up the position of organist in another church, and Mr. John Hemmingway, of Londonderry, was appointed. The latter resigned in April, 1896, and some months elapsed before the office was filled. During this interval Mr. Gordon T. C. Clements, who was then a member of the choir, and who is now the esteemed pastor of Donore Congregation, Dublin, undertook charge of the choir, and discharged the duties very efficiently. There were several applications for the position, but after some time Mr. Leighton was approached, and, having consented to be re-appointed, he continued to occupy the position with marked success for a further period of 22 years. He was a very capable conductor, and was ably supported by a large choir. For many years he organised and conducted the annual concert in aid of Masonic Charities, and he was on some occasions invited by the General Assembly's Committee on Psalmody to conduct at the Choir Festival, in which a massed choir, including representatives of various church choirs, took part. At the guild meetings he gave several lectures on musical subjects, illustrated by different members of the choir.

In 1903 Sir James H. Haslett offered an organ for the use of the congregation in public worship. The session took the mind of the congregation before accepting the offer, and by a large majority it was decided to introduce instrumental music. Later, during the ministry of Rev. Wm. Patterson, D.D., the singing of hymns was introduced. When the basement was being transformed into a Lecture Hall

and class-room, the congregation decided to instal a large pipe organ, and a contract was entered into with Mr. J. J. Binns, of Bramley, Leeds, to supply it to certain specifications for the sum of £850. A recent estimate by a representative of the firm of the present value of this organ is £2,000. To accommodate the organ the choir gallery was removed, and the room which was previously the choir room was rebuilt and used as an organ loft, and the wall between this room and the church taken down. The organ was opened by Mr. C. J. Brennan, Mus.B., city organist, who gave a recital in the church on 19th October, 1914.

Mr. Leighton resigned in 1920, and a reception was given at Belvoir Park by Sir James Johnston to the members of the choir and other friends, in his honour, on 19th June, when he was made the recipient of a presentation from the congregation of a cheque for £150, in consideration of his long and faithful services.

After hearing a long list of candidates, each presiding at the organ for one Sabbath, the committee selected Miss F. M. Shepperd, L.R.A.M., and the session duly ratified the appointment, which has proved a very happy one. Her leadership of the praise service and her management of the choir have given entire satisfaction, and under her training the choir has won many distinctions in musical competitions. Shortly after her appointment Mr. Cecil R. Macauley, who had a fine tenor voice, joined the choir and acted as its secretary with great efficiency. He was elected on the congregational committee in 1924. To the intense sorrow of all who knew him he was suddenly stricken down, and died on 9th December, 1926, after a few days' illness. He was a young man of great promise, and his loss was keenly felt. The session and committee at a special meeting adopted a resolution of sympathy with Mrs. Macauley, to whom he had been married but a few months previously, and to his other relatives.

During the past two years the choir has had a unique experience, no fewer than twelve members having married in that short time. This created many vacancies, which have been speedily filled, and there is no doubt but that the high standard which has been set in the past will be maintained in the days to come.

SOCIETIES

Between forty and fifty years ago May Street Young Men's Literary Society was a popular and flourishing department of congregational activity, and some men who afterwards became prominent in public life gained their first experience in meetings held under its auspices. Several of its members took a leading part in the formation of the Central Presbyterian Association, and some time after the formation of the latter association the local meetings were discontinued. The society was revived during the ministry of Rev. W. J. McCaughan, under the name of May Street Literary Society, and included members of both sexes. The society has continued to flourish, and during recent years many interesting and instructive lectures on a variety of subjects have been given by well-known lecturers. The present secretary is Mr. Wm. M. Cuthbert, who deserves every credit for the high quality of the programmes submitted. The meetings are held on Monday evenings, on an average about twice a month during the session. The Social Guild also meets on Monday evenings, about once a month, and it is now the practice to print a combined programme.

THE BOYS' BRIGADE

19th Company

In January, 1893, a company of the Boys' Brigade was formed in connection with the Sabbath-school, and was enrolled as the 19th Company in the Belfast Battalion. John Williamson was appointed captain,

and was ably assisted by Samuel E. A. Acheson as lieutenant, who had charge of the drill and also taught the boys signalling and ambulance work. The captain taught the Bible Class, which met on Thursday evenings and was well attended. The strength of the company, which was about 40 boys, was well maintained for five sessions, and some measure of success attended the efforts of those in charge, as the company was runner-up in the competition for the Battalion Colours at the close of the session in 1895. The captain resigned in September, 1897, and the company was not continued. Some of the boys who passed through this company afterwards became active Sabbath-school workers, and amongst them were William Macauley Bell, Edwin P. Cruiks, and Robert T. Gray, who are still connected with the congregation.

27th Company

Shortly after William C. Leeburn joined the congregation he organised the present company, which was enrolled as the 27th in the Belfast Battalion on 4th March, 1912. Mr. Leeburn acted as captain for three years, and was succeeded by Samuel Lemon, who had been previously associated with the 9th Company. On his removal to live at Bangor, James Adamson was appointed captain in 1915, and acted in this capacity for four sessions. Mr. Adamson emigrated to New Zealand to undertake ministerial work in that country, and later removed to Australia, and he is at present in charge of a congregation in the neighbourhood of Perth, West Australia. During the session 1919–20 the company was in charge of Joseph H. Bell and John McAlery. The present captain, Ernest Rea, was appointed in 1920, and the company entered an era of unprecedented success. Mr. Rea had been connected with 13th Company, who were then the holders of the Battalion Physical Culture Cup. Raymond D. McAnally and Robert Connolly also transferred from

13th Company and became lieutenants in the 27th Company. At the close of the session 1920–21 the company was declared the winner of the Battalion Junior Challenge Shield, winner of Battalion Physical Culture Cup, and runner-up for the Battalion Colours, which it has succeeded in winning on four occasions since then; whilst the company has won the Physical Culture Cup, of which it has been the holder for seven years out of the last nine. In addition to these honours, members of the company have on two occasions won first place in Battalion Junior Scripture Examination. During the session 1920–21, memorial bugles were dedicated to the memory of the following old boys who were killed in action: Sergeant J. W. McMillan, Privates G. Bratten, J. Young, A. Morrow, H. Moore, and J. Carson.

The Bible Class in connection with the company meets on Sabbath mornings and is largely attended. The company is fortunate in having a large staff of officers, who are enthusiastically devoted to the interests of the boys, and in the loyal support which it receives from the members of the congregation. The present strength is 56 boys, 2 staff-sergeants, and 9 officers, making a total of 67.

OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

A FEW years ago an Old Boys' Association was formed for the benefit of those boys who had reached an age when they must pass out of the ranks of the Boys' Brigade. Charles Giddings is the energetic secretary, and the primary room has been placed at their disposal for games and as a club-room. There is a gymnastic class in connection with the association, in addition to a cricket club and a football club. The gymnastic apparatus, which cost about £60, was provided entirely through the efforts of the members of the association and of the Girls' Club.

THE LIFE BOYS

In 1925 there was formed in the congregation a team of Boy Reserves, under the leadership of Herbert McAlery. This organisation was confined to boys between the ages of 8 and 12 years, and its function was to act as a recruiting agency for the Boys' Brigade. Two years later a union was formed with the Boys' Life Brigade—a kindred organisation—under the title of the Life Boys. It is fulfilling the object for which it was formed. The young lads are very keen, and each year at the annual inspection those boys who have reached the age of 12 are handed over to the captain of the 27th Company Boys' Brigade, and the training which they have received as Life Boys makes them very efficient members of the company. In 1926 the May Street Boy Reserves won the Battalion Pennant in the competition for the best drilled team.

GIRLS' CLUBS

There is a Senior and a Junior Girls' Club, of which Miss Rea is the leader. The girls are taught drill and action songs. The programmes for the Sabbath-school social meetings have for some years been provided by the junior girls. There is also a gymnastic class for girls, of which Mr. Jack Allan is the honorary instructor, and the annual displays given by these clubs, usually in the People's Palace, Donegall Road, have attracted large audiences.

RAMBLERS' CLUB

For some years a Ramblers' Club has existed in the congregation, and the excursions organised in connection with it are most popular. The parties usually number between 40 and 80, and many interesting and enjoyable afternoons have been spent in visiting

different parts of the country. The members do the catering, and the cost is most moderate. Mr. James Greer is the secretary.

TENNIS CLUB

THREE years ago the young people of the congregation formed a Tennis Club and rented ground at New Forge from the Central Presbyterian Association. Last year, however, they had the opportunity of purchasing the interests of another club in a piece of ground at Rosetta, containing five courts and a suitable pavilion. The expense was heavy, but the members raised the entire amount required by their own efforts, and they were able to close last year free of debt.

BADMINTON CLUB

A COURT has been marked out in the upper Lecture Hall, and is available for Badminton when the hall is not required for other purposes. There are some very enthusiastic players in connection with the club, and many successes have been gained in contests with similar clubs.

BEQUESTS AND DONATIONS

THE earliest bequest to the congregation was £100, known as the Graham Bequest, the interest of which is devoted to the Sabbath-school.

The second bequest was left by Olivia Kinnaird Faint, who lived at 221, Albertbridge Road, and the amount was £100, the interest of which was to be paid to the Sustentation Fund.

Mr. Samuel Ross left three bequests of £100 each, interest to be devoted to the Sustentation Fund, Cromac Square Mission, and Foreign Mission.

Mr. Wm. P. McDowell, who was an elder of the church and brother-in-law to Mr. John Woods, left

£50 for Ground Rent Fund, £50 for Cromac Square, and £50 for Foreign Missions.

A donation of £50 was received from Mr. Wm. Marshall, to be invested and interest paid to Cromac Square Mission; and £25 was received from the representatives of Mr. John Clements for the same object.

Mrs. Eliza Beattie, the widow of John Beattie, city missionary, left her entire estate, amounting to £394 1*s.* 1*d.*, to the Ground Rent Fund.

Mr. William Henry Graham Reid, who resided at "Glengariff," 36, Ardenlee Avenue, and who had been a member of committee for some years, died on 2nd September, 1925, and by his will he left the sum of five hundred pounds to the committee of May Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast, to invest same to form a fund to be called "The Reid Memorial Fund," and out of the proceeds thereof to provide an annual trip for the members of the choir of the said church, the balance of the proceeds (if any) to go to the Choir Fund of said church; the sum of five hundred pounds, to be used as the committee of said church in their discretion shall think right for the benefit of said church; and five hundred pounds upon trust, to invest same and apply the proceeds for the benefit of the Cromac Square Mission in connection with said church, in such manner as the said committee shall think right.

Mr. John Woods also left £50 for Sustentation Fund and £50 for Foreign Missions, to be paid at the rate of £10 to each for a period of five years. The representatives paid the amount to the committee in one payment.

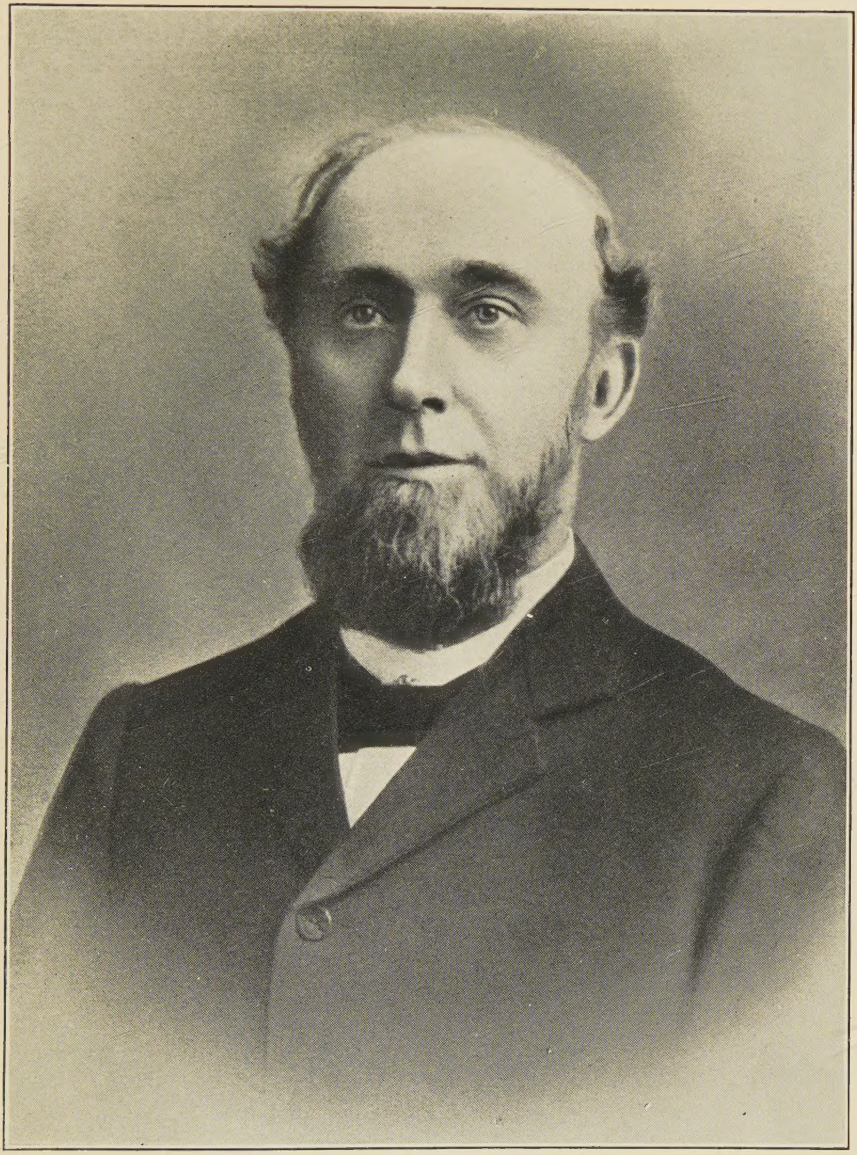
For many years there has been a noteworthy event in the history of the congregation. During the ministry of Dr. Lynd he was in the habit of receiving annually an anonymous letter containing bank-notes, with a note enclosed marked for missions for the extension of Christ's kingdom. The amount originally was £30,

but in later years it increased until it reached £70. These contributions continued, even when there were vacancies in the pastorate, the letters being addressed to the treasurer. For a few years prior to 1925 these gifts ceased, but in that year the sum of £230 was received in this way; and every year since then amounts varying from £50 to £70 have been received. The ministers and office-bearers have never made any attempt to discover the identity of the generous donor or donors. The receipt has always been acknowledged from the pulpit. Our Father which seeth in secret shall recompense.

CENTENARY MEETINGS

It is proposed to celebrate the centenary of the opening of the church in October and the early part of November of the present year, and the following arrangements have been made: the Right Rev. J. L. Morrow, M.A., D.D., Moderator of the General Assembly, has accepted an invitation to conduct both services on 6th October; the Rev. A. W. Blue is to occupy the pulpit on 13th; and on Friday, 18th, which is the anniversary of the opening of the church, there is to be a social gathering in the Church Halls, followed by a public meeting in the church; the Rev. W. Y. Fullerton, D.D., is to preach on the 20th; Rev. Lachlan McLean Watt, D.D., of Glasgow Cathedral, has promised to conduct the services on 27th; and the celebration is to conclude with a mission conducted by Rev. Alexander Frazer, of Aberdeen, beginning Tuesday, 29th, and continuing into the first week in November.

It is sought in this manner to remember God's gracious dealing with His church in this place throughout the vicissitudes of the past; to beseech His blessing on the work at present being carried on; and to seek His gracious guidance for the days that are yet to be.



JAMES KENNEDY
Church Officer for 37 Years